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THE MYSTERY IN PALACE GARDENS.

BY MRS. J. H. RIDDELL.

CHAPTER IV.

IN THE MORNING TWILIGHT.

MANY years before Mr. Seaton left London, before he had even taken the house in Palace Gardens, very early upon a summer's morning a gentleman was walking towards London, along that great eastern thoroughfare, then called indifferently the Norwich, the Ilford, or the Romford-road, but now generally distinguished by the latter name.

Of the suburbs situated in Essex, the gentleman who was walking towards London had literally no knowledge whatever; indeed his knowledge of most of the metropolitan districts lying outside a certain very narrow radius could not but be considered limited in the extreme. His tastes had not led, neither had circumstances compelled him to wander far afield, and, though many years a resident in London, he was still as ignorant of its less frequented environs—well, as most persons are who live within the bills of mortality.

Had he been aware of the fact, he was passing through a county which, flat and uninteresting though it may be to the outward

eye, is yet full of strange associations and historical memories for the man who has intelligently walked through the storehouses of history; but so far in his life this well-dressed individual had devoted his attention more to the present than the past, and, consequently, he was rather less acquainted with the notable events that have occurred in that part of Essex than he was with the wide, flat, treeless road, along which he was hastening.

He had been to a party.

In those days 'people who were people' still resided in the wide rich country lying east and north-east of the City, so close to the great Babylon, and yet still so far off.

The time was gone by, it is true, when those who helped to make history, whose names will never be forgotten, had their pleasant homes and haunts in neighbourhoods now given over to the demon of smoke and his twin brother, the fiend Vile Odours; but a quarter of a century ago, though the roses themselves might be dead and gone, their scent hung round many a stately mansion and fair broad park, and merchants who stood high in the

City, and who were known in lands beyond the sea, lived in those great houses, of which too few now remain, holding themselves aloof from more newly-risen men in the City, and residing in dignified seclusion near the wide-spreading marshes, which brought no ague to them; or the 'Flats,' across which the wind howled on the dark winter nights, when it was very bad for ships tossing about the German Ocean; or under the shelter of the forest trees, which they cut and lopped as though Epping belonged to them, when they wanted timber or took a fancy for correcting Nature's over-luxuriance of growth.

Some of those immense mansions still remain to tell of the state once held in them; great houses, that one laments to see, pass away under the auctioneer's hammer and become devoted to uses their builders never dreamed they would be put to.

They are to be met with, or perhaps it would be more correct to say they were to be met with (for the things which were yesterday are often not to-day, in modern London) all round and about the forest—Snaresbrook, Wanstead, Leytonstone, Leyton, Whip's Cross, and Walthamstow, also leaving the wood country and getting down towards the marshes, at Ilford, Barking, West and East Ham, Forest Gate, and Upton.

It was from Upton the gentleman who walked Londonward came—Upton, then a most lonely little corner of the world, where lived, in some very large houses, some very wealthy people; but now, since West Ham House and grounds have been converted into a people's park, a mere collection of dwellings, run up by contract, with a station hard by, workmen's trains at convenient hours, and

London, like the water and the gas, brought to its very door. Until lately there was no station nearer than Forest Gate, and but few trains stopped there for the benefit of the Uptonians. From Plaistow the Tilbury railway ran through without stop or thought of stop till the train reached Barking; but in those days the lack of railway accommodation was not felt so much as is the case at present. People who were making fortunes had not then forgotten how to walk; people who had made their fortunes liked to drive to their accustomed haunts, and many a man who now lives in one of the fashionable squares or terraces out due west holds in his heart pleasant memories of the morning of life which he spent due east when he was familiar with every glade in Epping Forest, and could have found his way blindfold to the 'preserved water' at Barking.

In Upton, then, not at the Cross but near it, resided a merchant, known to the gentleman who walked westward in the cold gray light of a summer's morning before the break of day, after the fashion in which so many business people in London are known to each other.

They met on 'Change; they exchanged greetings cordially; they had commercial transactions. Number one understood pretty well the amount number two was 'good for,' and number two comprehended that, concerning the financial position of number one, there 'could be no doubt.'

Much more than this, however, they did not know. The one, it is true, understood that the other was neither an adventurer nor a man risen from the gutter. He was well aware that he had a father living in Lancashire, whom his neighbours respected, and of

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whom the local bankers gave a good report. It had, in the regular course of business, been necessary for the merchant who resided at Upton to learn this much of the younger man's antecedents, and during the course of their City acquaintance he had never seen anything calculated to throw discredit upon the statements made by those who had known him from a boy.

On the contrary, indeed. If he had been a hundred years of age instead of five-and-thirty, he could not have 'buckled' to his work with greater readiness, or treated business more as a pleasure than he did.

He was at the office as soon as his clerks in the morning; he often might be found there after they left at night. He did not often treat himself to a holiday, but when he went away even for a short time, Mr. Marker generally found he had taken train from Euston-square and gone down to see his parents.

There was not a breath of scandal against him. His language was discreet and his deportment grave, his word could be relied upon, his statements believed implicitly.

Speculative people considered him over-cautious; but persons whose opinions carried weight commended him as prudent.

'A rising man, sir,' remarked Alderman Chitterly to Mr. Marker, and Mr. Marker said, Yes; he agreed with the Alderman.

It was in virtue of this belief that Mr. Marker, after a business acquaintance of six years, or thereabouts, asked the 'rising man' out to Upton.

'We are going to have something in the way of a dance,' he remarked, with that homely simplicity of language in which City men often delight, to veil the glories to be unfolded before the

astonished eyes of an unsophisticated guest. 'My girls have a couple of friends stopping with them, and so "pa" must needs let them give a party. Quite a quiet affair, you know,' he went on, 'only our neighbours and a few young fellows my sons are acquainted with. Come early; nine o'clock. O! I can't take a refusal, I really can't. You don't dance? Well, then, we will let you look on. There will be a bit of supper at twelve, and though I do not want to boast, I can give you a glass of wine such as you don't often meet with.'

Thus Mr. Marker obtained his pleasant way; the rising man did not want to go to a party at Upton, or, for the matter of that, to a party anywhere; but there was no particular reason why he should refuse the invitation, and Mr. Marker was pressing, and the distance reasonable, and Upton readily accessible from Plaistow or Forest Gate, or even Stratford.

That is to say, accessible in the evening going from London; but it did not seem an accessible neighbourhood at two o'clock in the morning, with never a train, or omnibus, or fly, or cab, to take him back to his lodgings.

He was a good walker, however, and so set out undaunted to work his way back to civilisation on foot. He walked fast, for the topcoat he wore over his evening dress was of the thinnest summer cloth, and the fog from the marshes had crept up through the night on the breath of an easterly wind, and Mr. Marker's rooms, large though they were, got towards the 'witching hour' uncomfortably hot, and after the gas and the crowd of hurrying dancers the bare high road felt bleak and chilly, though the season was summer and the month July.

He had partaken of Mr. Marker's

wine and found it good; he had been presented to Mrs. Marker, and beheld that she was fat, and did her utmost to be gracious; he had danced with the 'girls,' or rather walked through two or three quadrilles, and saw that they were fair, and observed that their friends entered into the same category; he had been privileged to gaze upon some triumphs of upholstery, and mix amongst people who were very 'good' people indeed; men great on the boards of companies, incipient lord mayors, future financiers, embryo members of Parliament; not a man present who was not rich or on the way to be rich; not a woman who had not her 'dot' in reality or expectation.

She had 'so much to her fortune,' 'she will bring her husband such a sum,' seemed written upon portly mammas and slim fragile daughters. It was the Stock Exchange and the Court of Aldermen 'at home.' Everything seemed to say 'money no object,' except to make. Here was a man who could sign his cheque for fifty thousand pounds and think no more of doing so than you might, reader, of asking a banker to pay your modest fiver; there, another who was intimate with Rothschild, and who partial friends considered could feel the pecuniary pulse of England as well as that potentate.

It was an assemblage of much richer people than the 'rising man' had expected to meet; and the appointments of Mr. Marker's house were far grander than he had expected to find them; and yet as he walked Londonward along the Romford-road, he was not thinking of pretty daughters, or papas who were worth a plum; he had forgotten alike the bouquet of Mr. Marker's wine and the scent of the flowers in Mr. Marker's con-

servatory; and though, with that curious duality of impression which we can so often remember to have ourselves experienced, he walked briskly on, keeping step to the rhythm of a galop his mind insisted on humming over and over again, his thoughts were far away from London and the house he had just quitted, away by the seashore on the flat Lancashire coast; in his father's office; on the hillside, looking down at a modest cottage close beside a mountain torrent; and again out with rod and reel to the calm deeps and dark still waters a mile or so down the stream, where the brawling waterfall rested quiet for a while ere breaking loose once more and hurrying off helter-skelter to the sea.

As he proceeded on his way he had to pass some mean-looking dwellings set a little back from the road, with green palings dividing their gardens, and fencing them off from the public thoroughfare.

The gardens were not large; like the houses, they were but of modest dimensions, and yet successive occupants had contrived to fill them with a wealth of flower and shrub which might have shamed many a stately mansion.

At the gate of one of these gardens there stood a woman looking intently in the direction of London. The gate was flanked by a tree of privet, large and bushy, though kept carefully trimmed, and on the other by a Portuguese laurel, surrounded by a good undergrowth of laurestinus.

The 'rising man,' walking fast, did not perceive the woman, shrouded from sight by the leafy screen, till he was almost past her, and then he did not see her face, both because it was turned from



THE WATCHER AT THE GATE.

See 'The Mystery in Palace Gardens,' p. 100.

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him, and also because the night shadows were not fully lifted by the hand of the coming day.

He had not got more than a couple of yards, however, beyond the gate beside which she stood when he stopped surprised.

'Did you speak to me?' he asked, looking round.

'Yes,' she answered. 'Are you going to Stratford?'

He turned, but did not retrace his steps.

'I am going to London,' he said.

'It is the same thing,' she remarked. 'As you pass through Stratford will you do something for me?'

'What is it?' he inquired doubtfully.

He was not an impulsive man, and his instincts certainly never led him to rush madly to the relief of beauty in distress.

'Only to leave a note at the doctor's,' she explained—if she noticed his hesitation she took no notice of it. 'Come in a minute while I get it,' and she opened the garden-gate as she spoke and waited for him.

He went towards her slowly; he had no intention of going in; he never felt less inclined to do anything in his life than to stand there parleying with her; he had resided long enough in London to have outlived the frank trust, the fearless confidence of the country; but he could not overlook the one word 'doctor,' and if his help were really needed he was not the man to refuse giving it, even though his acquiescence involved considerable inconvenience to himself.

So he took the half-dozen steps that intervened between them, walked close up to the gate beside which she stood, a white ghostly-looking figure, and in the dim light beheld, as in a dream, the

most beautiful woman his eyes had ever rested upon.

His eyes, remember. She might not have seemed so beautiful to you or to me, but to him she seemed the loveliest creature on earth.

He could not speak, so great was his surprise, so thoroughly did he doubt the evidence of his senses; but it was not necessary for him to say anything.

'Come in,' she repeated. 'I have been waiting, hoping some one would pass, though I scarcely expected any one would, in this forsaken place. I should have gone myself but I can't leave him.'

'Leave whom?' asked the gentleman.

'My husband,' she answered impatiently, motioning the stranger to enter. 'I have written a line; if you wait an instant I will get it. You won't go away while I am in the house, will you?'

'No,' he answered, feeling more and more like one talking and looking in a dream, 'I won't go away.'

She shut the garden-gate and flitted away up the short gravelled path, and across the threshold of her poor home, leaving him standing in the dark shadow of the Portuguese laurel.

CHAPTER V.

MR. PALTHORPE.

He had scarcely time to take in the external details of her home before she reappeared.

In one hand she held the note, with the other she was twisting up a coil of her long hair, which had either been unbound for the night or escaped from its confinement while she was attending upon the sick man.

'Ask him to come instantly—not to lose a moment,' she said. 'The bandages have slipped, and he is very bad indeed.'

If she knew that she was beautiful she had not a single act or trick which generally accompanies the possession of personal charms—not a turn of head or hand, not one involuntary grace to enhance her loveliness, no winning tone, no subtle inflexion of voice, no feminine gesture of deprecation, entreaty, gratitude. Many a lady in the land would have shown more courtesy towards the poorest beggar who turned the handle of her carriage-door than she evinced to this strange gentleman, whom she commanded without a word of apology or regret to do her bidding.

The instincts of a woman's nature are not blotted out by circumstances of anxiety, danger, and fear; and any one who had chanced to be well acquainted with the sex must, even making all allowances for her position, have been repelled by something in this woman's manner which not all her beauty could soften down or anxiety excuse. And yet that something arose more from a want in her character than from any other cause.

To this man whom she desired to do her a service she was not intentionally rude. If she had known how to address him differently, she would no doubt have backed her request with winning pleading words and sweet sad smiles; but Nature had not given her the graces of gentleness and softness, and art had failed as yet to make up for Nature's deficiencies.

So far in her life her rare beauty proved sufficient for her needs, and once again it secured her ready service.

'Where does this doctor live?'

inquired the gentleman, taking the note from her, and laying his hand on the latch of the garden-gate as he asked the question; 'and how am I to find him?'

'In the Grove,' she answered impatiently. 'Anybody will direct you—and do tell him to make haste.'

That was all; not a word of thanks, or of apology, or of excuse. Her attire was of the most sketchy description. Even in the still imperfect light any one could see she had merely donned some few under-garments and thrown a wrapper loosely round her figure; but she might have been dressed for a *fête*, judging from the perfect indifference she displayed about the matter.

'Poor creature!' thought the gentleman, as he walked more rapidly than before westward along the London-road. 'How miserably anxious she seems; how fortunate it is that I chanced to be passing at the moment!'

Fortunate! Well, well, our fortune, good or bad, is generally made for us by ourselves.

In the after years when he remembered that for what it was—the most unfortunate morning of his whole life—he knew that for the evil which came of the meeting he had no one to thank but himself; that when he took the wrong road and walked along it with an affectation of not being aware whither it would lead, he was scarcely cheating even his own understanding; that he could, if he would, have told all along where he was going, and hazarded more than a guess as to what would meet him at the end.

To be cast into a town where you have never been before and told to pick out haphazard a particular place and a special house cannot be considered an easy task; yet with less delay than might

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have been expected the stranger in Stratford found the Grove and the doctor, whose name he read written upon the letter.

He rang, and almost immediately an upper window was opened, and a head thrust out.

'Who is it? What do you want?' asked the owner of that head.

As well as he was able, considering he did not know the name of the people and could only hazard a guess as to the designation of the road where they lived, the stranger answered the latter question.

'I have a note,' he added; 'and I was to beg of you to lose no time.'

'All right,' said the doctor, 'I'll be with you in a minute;' and he proved as good as his word.

In less time than it seemed possible for a man to dress himself, however hastily, he opened the door and bade the messenger enter.

'Come into the surgery,' he said, leading the way to a room at the back of the hall, where a gas-burner was alight, though turned down low. 'You have a note, give it to me please,' and he turned up the jet and ran his eye over the few lines traced upon the paper. 'It's bad,' he commented, 'very bad. I'll just take a few things with me and be off at once. Are you going back now?'

'I? No; I am bound for London. I know nothing about the people.'

'O,' said the doctor, looking out the various articles he required with wonderful speed and accuracy, 'then how does it happen you are their messenger?' and he turned his glance curiously upon his visitor as he spoke.

Never afterwards could the stranger understand or analyse the feeling which prevented him saying,

'I happened to be returning from a party at Mr. Marker's.'

The words were actually on his lips when something prevented their utterance. There was no reason why he should not have spoken them, no cause why he need have substituted for that frank statement the answer,

'I chanced to be passing, and Mrs.—'

'Palthorpe,' suggested the doctor as he hesitated.

'Palthorpe was standing at her gate looking out for a messenger.'

'I see; and so she impressed you into the service?'

'Of course I was glad to be able to be of any assistance.'

'Then I wish you would add another to one good work performed—that of returning with me. I may want assistance, and Mrs. Palthorpe is not the most useful person in the world in a sick-room.'

'If I can be of service command me.'

'Thank you. I see from your dress you are not bound on any errand of life and death, and this is really a sad case. You won't repent, I think, doing what you can for the poor fellow.'

Would he not? That was all the doctor knew about the matter.

'Is he dangerously ill?' asked the other, who could guess as little what the future held for him as the doctor.

'Dangerously? Well, no, for I hope he will pull through; but he is very seriously ill. With good nursing and good food and an easy mind he might mend rapidly, but as matters stand it is a troublesome charge. Now I am ready if you are. Shall we be off?'

The stranger, who had indeed only been waiting his companion's convenience, signified assent, and they went out of the house and

down the paved courtyard together.

It was now daylight; the houses in the best part of the Grove looked pretty and secluded, standing behind their screen of plantation, their windows peeping out from behind the trees. St. John's Church caught the beams of the rising sun, and seen just at that point and at that quiet time of the morning Stratford really looked a nice sort of town, a town where any one might like to reside.

Some opinion of this kind was hazarded by the gentleman, who had never beheld the place before.

'Ah!' said the doctor, and he said no more; but his tone implied many things which he failed to express in words.

They returned to the Romford-road by a nearer way than that selected by Mrs. Palthorpe's messenger, who had indeed unwittingly made a considerable *détour* before discovering the house of which he was in search.

They passed by the Green, with its snug old-fashioned houses and large fruitful gardens, and its outlook upon longer and stranger lines of funeral processions than can possibly be obtained in any other part of London. As the sun rose the mist cleared away, and revealed the long flat road and the turnip- and cabbage-fields to right and left.

'Picturesque, isn't it?' said the doctor disparagingly. 'You should see it on a foggy winter's day. Have you ever been down in the marshes beyond North Woolwich?'

'Never.'

'You ought to go, then, just for once. How people live there I can't imagine, and yet still they don't seem to have so many ailments after all.'

'What they have prove suffi-

cient, I suppose,' remarked his companion with a certain irony which seemed to fit in well enough with the doctor's humour.

'All about this part is healthy enough,' he said, remembering, perhaps, it doubtful policy to run down a neighbourhood which furnishes grist for the mill.

'It had need to have some compensating advantages,' was the reply, 'for it is not a beautiful district.'

'It lies close to a nice country, though. Within a couple of miles of this road I could take you some walks you would not believe were to be found so close to London. If you are fond of sylvan scenery you ought to run down to any one of the stations on the Loughton line, and spend an afternoon in the Forest. You would be delighted with that neighbourhood. At all times of the year those grand avenues of trees and the perfect solitude are to my thinking charming.'

'Really?'

'Really and truly; you will be surprised when you get there, and not more surprised than pleased.'

'I shall make a point of following your advice some day.'

He did not dream how early that some day was to be.

Though not particularly interesting, this conversation seemed to beguile the way till they reached the cottage where Mrs. Palthorpe was watching for the doctor.

She had taken advantage of the time, however, to make some alterations in and additions to her dress, and now stood in the morning sunshine, a very beautiful picture, notwithstanding that her gown was but a common print, and she wore no ornament save that given her by God, loveliness both of face and person.

A remarkable-looking woman, excessively handsome, endowed

with a weird beauty that had little attraction for the mass of people whom she met in the streets, or with whom she had been brought more directly into contact.

Hers was not mere prettiness, no triumph of roses and lilies, of golden hair, of blue innocent eyes; quite the contrary. And yet her tresses did not outvie the raven's wings, or her eyes dwell in the memory by reason of their brilliancy, their blackness, or their dusky dreamy splendour. No; if you had seen her you would have thought with the strange gentleman now coming up the road with the doctor,—you had never beheld any one in the least resembling her, whether in the flesh or on canvas, or in description. Neither when you had seen her could you have catalogued her with anything approaching precision, and said,

'She is lovely in feature, or form, or colour, or figure; it is here, it is there, that charm of beauty lingers.'

Look at those masses of hair, deepest darkest brown, at the well-cut chin, the delicately-formed nose, the small white even teeth, the short upper lip, the pose of her head, the clear complexion, cream-like, and with only the faintest tinge of pink showing in it occasionally, the strange brown eyes, the straight black brows, the long curled lashes, the shell-like ears, the lithe supple figure; and when you have looked and acknowledged that she is almost perfect in feature and in form, you will still find yourself unable to say what it is that impresses you with a greater sense of personal beauty than you ever felt before, that critically you must admire, though you feel there is something you do not approve.

Doctor Dilton could have hazarded an opinion as to the

repellent force in this singular-looking creature. He could understand that better than the attraction she seemed to possess for her husband, at all events.

'I would not marry that woman,' he said to his wife when they once met her in the Broadway; 'no, not if she were twice as handsome as she is, and had half a million of money.'

Mrs. Dilton was a washed-out little blonde, with faded blue eyes, a nose of no particular order, a peevish temper, and not a farthing of fortune; but the doctor was right. His wife possessed something Mrs. Palthorpe lacked. Spite of her faults, she had a woman's heart beating loyally in her small body; whilst as for Mrs. Palthorpe—

'Heaven forgive me, sometimes I do not think she is a woman at all,' he considered once as he walked meditatively homeward; 'if I believed in some of those stories, now, that we read of in old books, I might imagine—but, pshaw! where am I drifting? my business is to cure her husband, and not to concern myself about her.'

When Doctor Dilton and his companion drew near the gate she opened it for them, just as she had opened it in the earlier morning, and after the merest word of greeting to the former she turned to the man who had done her errand, and said,

'I made sure you had played me false when I saw you in the distance; I was waiting here hoping I should get some one else to go to the Grove for me.'

'The delay was with me, Mrs. Palthorpe,' broke in the doctor. 'To save time I brought such things with me as I feared might be required, and at my request this gentleman,' he laid a marked emphasis on the words, 'has

kindly, and I fear to his own inconvenience, returned in case I wanted any assistance.'

Mrs. Palthorpe looked for a moment at the stranger attentively, looked him over from head to foot, and then said with a slight flush rising to her cheeks,

'I am sure I am very much obliged. I hope, sir, you will excuse the liberty I took in stopping you, but I did not know what else to do. I had no one in the house I could send, and—'

'I quite understand all that,' interrupted the stranger gravely and courteously, the while a tremor which was almost a shiver passed over him. 'Pray don't make an apology; I am only too happy, I am sure, to believe I have been of any service.'

'Now I will go up-stairs,' said Doctor Dilton, moving towards the house. 'I can find my way, thank you, Mrs. Palthorpe.'

She would not suffer him to go alone, however, and they proceeded together to the first floor, leaving Mr. Marker's guest, who had certainly not anticipated this conclusion of the evening's experiences, to amuse himself as best he could by looking at the tiny garden laid out in the Dutch style, a round bed in the middle, quaint little corner beds to match, an oblong patch, top and bottom, all surrounded by luxuriant box edging, and divided by walks about six inches wide. It was a poor mean home, built chiefly of wood, and with that tumbledown look which houses out of elbows with fortune seem to have a greater facility in acquiring even than their owners, and yet Nature, who, like God, is no 'respector of persons,' seemed almost to have outdone herself in efforts to adorn and beautify the humble habitation.

Jasmine grew beside the porch, and spread itself over the window.

It was full of flower, and the sweet scent loaded the morning air—mingled with other perfumes, however; mignonette, pinka, carnations, musk, and a score of other such plants miscalled common, thrrove in their little enclosures like weeds, and sent forth their odours on the dew-laden air. In one corner there grew a bush of sweet-brier, in another a white rose-tree; over the whole front of the house climbed another rose, crimson, whilst as for greenery wisteria and honeysuckle and hops wereso twined and twisted together that where the one began and the other ended it would have puzzled any one to say.

It pleased the man who looked at all these things to imagine Mrs. Palthorpe flitting about the tiny garden, tying up the carnations, training the roses, bending the tendrils of the hops westward so that they might grow better, following the course of the sun, as the pretty fancy or fact teaches us ought to be done, gathering her lavender, making herself up bouquets, idly busy amongst the buds and blossoms, 'herself a fairer flower;' but if he had known a little more of Mrs. Palthorpe he would have guessed it must be some other hand which planted and tended and pruned and watered, some other whose love of the beautiful had been touched by those masses of greenery, by the quaintly set-out garden, by the great Portuguese laurel, by the songs of the birds, by the quiet of the house, which, though so mean and poor, was the best he could afford, and which, small and narrow as it seemed to the eyes of others, he clung to because it was 'home.'

Up-stairs this man lay ill, and about him the stranger who stood looking round the garden thought a good deal almost unconsciously.

He wondered to what manner of husband a creature endowed with such glorious beauty was tied. That she could not be a lady he had known before he saw her face, and it was most probable that she had bound herself to love, honour, and obey one who occupied even a lower position in the social scale.

If such personal gifts as she undoubtedly possessed had failed to produce those graces that seem naturally to associate themselves with youth and loveliness in the female sex, how was it to be expected that a man fighting his way in the world, waging that war against circumstances which it is the lot of the lowly-born to carry on so constantly,—a rough soldier keeping step with difficulty among the rank and file of London's great army,—should be more cultivated and refined?

'No doubt,' thought this stranger, standing amongst the flowers the man's own hand had planted, 'he is an uncultivated lout; but how anxious she was about him! Well, well, we know it is not always the brightest intellect, the highest attainments, that attract a woman's fancy and rivet her affections.'

'The doctor says, would you please go up-stairs to him,' thus Mrs. Palthorpe broke in upon his meditations.

He started, for her footsteps had fallen almost noiselessly upon the gravel, and he did not hear her approach. She had been so completely in his thoughts—she and her husband and her antecedents and her present position—that for a moment he felt confused at seeing her, and almost stammered as he answered:

'Certainly. Will you kindly show me the way, or can I find the room without troubling you?'

Evidently Mrs. Palthorpe

thought that he could, for she told him he would find the door open; and then, going into her little parlour, unfastened the shutter and threw wide the window, an expression of annoyance and discontent clouding her face as she leaned out of the casement and began idly to pluck the leaves off the roses clustering around it.

Meanwhile the stranger made his way up a narrow staircase and knocked softly at the open door Mrs. Palthorpe had mentioned.

'Come in,' said the doctor; and he entered.

It was a low room, but long, occupying the whole width of the house. There were two windows in it, both almost curtained by the creepers previously mentioned. That nearest the bed was closed, but through the other the sweet scent of flowers and the fresh breath of the early morning rose into the chamber of the sick man.

His bed, though placed between the door and one of the windows, was protected from draught by a screen roughly improvised by means of a clothes-horse, a railway-rug, and a blanket.

There was not much furniture in the room. It lacked even that look of common plenty which a labourer often manages to gather around him in the course of years—a French bedstead, painted imitation maple, a chest of drawers to match, a small wash-hand-stand, a dressing-table made out of a box covered with some cheap material, a few strips of carpet, dimity curtains to the windows, three strips of carpet round the bedstead, another by the wash-stand, and a fifth laid down before the toilet-table, a small looking-glass, two chairs—that was all; no fire-irons, no fender, no superfluous article of any kind, sort, or description, unless, indeed, it might be the invalid himself,

who, his head bound up, lay looking like death itself, breathing painfully.

Quite a young fellow too—ay, quite young. If the stranger's surmise were correct, and the man so shattered had ever been a coarse-looking lout, sickness must have effected a wonderful alteration in his appearance.

Unshorn, unkempt, uncared for as he looked, there was no more trace of roughness or commonness about him than could be found in his surroundings.

Poverty, bitter poverty, a glance sufficed to show, encompassed him; but in a man's house it is never the thing wanting, but rather the article too much, that turns the balance against him in the social scale. Bare floors and lack of furniture cannot of themselves condemn any one; but the furniture when chosen and the carpets when laid down often supply evidence sufficient to justify offended taste ordering the culprit to be hung by the neck. Now in this poor room, bare though it was of everything money could buy, the eye found no article to repel; rather, with the green leaves and starry flowers of the jasmine waving gently in the breeze, with the morning air filling the apartment with freshness and fragrance, there came a sense of beauty, a feeling of freedom, clouded only by a sentiment of profound pity for the human being stricken helpless in the midst of so lovely a world, unable to enjoy the summer sunshine and the glory of that golden time.

As regarded this man the stranger confessed himself at fault.

Well he knew the power of grievous illness to change and to destroy.

He had seen beauty distorted into deformity, a face ordinary

and weather-beaten paled and softened and attenuated till a painter might have desired to transfer it to canvas. He had looked in wonder at hands roughened by toil, discoloured by exposure, so wasted by sickness, so whitened by the course of the same malady that had blanched the cheeks, that they seemed as though they had never been soiled by labour or spoiled with hard work.

He was aware that sometimes, even as regards physical appearance, in that debateable land which is so close upon the threshold of another world, the peer may change places with the peasant, and the hind with his master; that illness, like suffering, brings into relief traits which have hitherto lain dormant, and throws the light reflected from a higher sphere upon pages we have hitherto been trying to read, in the darkness of a life where we see but as 'through a glass.'

Nevertheless, making allowance for all this, and remembering all the transformations his own eyes had beheld, the man who from the foot of the bed looked at the other and much younger man stretched upon it, felt perplexed.

Something in the quiet attitude of the figure, in the compressed mouth, in the hand stretched out over the coverlet, in the expanded nostrils, in the repression of all evidence of pain, told him the husband belonged to a loftier mental type and a higher rung on the social ladder than the wife whose beauty astonished him.

Watching his face the doctor saw that the enigma presented puzzled this stranger; but he only said in a low voice,

'I want you, please, to raise him a little, or rather to hold him after I have raised him.'

'Only show me what you wish

done, and I will strive to move him easily.'

The injured man, hearing an unfamiliar voice, opened his eyes wearily and looked at the new-comer.

'I do not know you,' he said languidly; 'but thank you. I wish I could thank you better.'

'You must not talk,' exclaimed the doctor.

'I try to do all you tell me,' answered the sick man wearily and slowly; 'but O, what a trouble I am to every one.'

'Trouble!' repeated the doctor cheerily. 'I think it is you who have all the trouble. Now don't be afraid, I am not going to hurt you.'

Quickly and skilfully he lifted him up a little, and then motioning the stranger to take his place, proceeded with his dressings as rapidly as possible.

Terrible were the injuries that poor body had received—ribs broken, chest damaged. Almost before a minute was elapsed the new-comer felt the sick man's head fall heavily against his breast, and the doctor, looking up at a sudden exclamation, saw his patient had fainted.

'He is so weak,' was his comment; 'hold him a minute longer. I have almost done. Lay him down now,' he added, almost directly afterwards, and the stranger complied with such deft gentleness, such tender carefulness, as elicited an encomium from the doctor.

Drawing his arm slowly away, he shifted the head from his breast to the pillow, and then stood looking at the sufferer.

In the days to come, in the days and weeks and months and years that were to follow, he would have given all he possessed, all he was ever likely to possess, to be able to lay down memory as he

then lay down that burden, to forget the placid look on that insensible face, and the expression which came into it after he was restored to consciousness, and tried to smile the gratitude he could not speak.

CHAPTER VI.

ALL FOR LOVE.

THEY lingered beside him some little time, the doctor giving such stimulants as his state required, the stranger moving softly about, regulating the light and arranging the poor draperies according to the directions whispered to him.

'I think he will go to sleep,' said Doctor Dilton, regarding his patient thoughtfully. 'I will look in again before midday, Mr. Palthorpe; and remember you are not to haraas yourself about anything. The quieter you keep, the quicker you will get well.'

He was moving away, when he noticed a feeble movement of the hand lying outside the coverlet, and seeing what the sick man wanted, took the wasted fingers in his own, and stooped down to catch the words that trembled upon those pallid lips.

'I—do—not—know—how to thank you.'

'Thank me! Pooh; nonsense! I have been able to do nothing for you yet; but I hope to accomplish a great deal. Now go to sleep. Shut your eyes; you must not try to look at us.'

And making a sign to the stranger, he turned towards the door.

'Good-bye, Mr. Palthorpe; I trust you will soon be restored to health,' said the gentleman, who was about to resume his walk westward towards London, just

touching the sick man's hand as he followed Doctor Dilton.

Mr. Palthorpe opened his eyes and looked sadly at the speaker.

'I shall—never,' he was beginning, when the doctor interposed.

'You *must not* talk or be talked to. Come away,' he added almost roughly to the stranger, who had certainly not meant to do any harm by his somewhat conventional speech. 'I beg your pardon for my apparent rudeness,' he said, when they stood at the foot of the stairs; 'but he will try to speak, and he is not strong enough for such exertion.'

'I am sorry to have been so indiscreet,' said the stranger, not at all offended in reality, though for a second he had looked a little annoyed; 'I ought not to have spoken to him.'

'No one could have behaved more kindly,' declared the doctor, with frank courtesy, and then he passed out into the garden, now flooded with morning sunshine, in the full glory of which Mrs. Palthorpe stood idly and discontentedly putting with listless fingers some flowers together for a bouquet.

To her Doctor Dilton at once addressed himself with terrible candour and but scant courtesy.

'Your husband is much worse to-day.'

'Yes; I do not know how those bandages happened to slip.'

'You were asleep, I suppose?' interrogatively.

'Yes, I had just fallen asleep,' defiantly.

'He is very ill indeed; dangerously ill.'

'I told you in my note he seemed very bad.'

It was curious to see how they looked at each other, while they spoke with subdued voices in tones that never rose above a whisper.

Upon his face there rested an expression of irritation and disapproval, on hers one of unconcealed dislike.

The stranger, watching them both, felt the doctor was harsh and unfeeling; all his sympathies were enlisted in favour of the woman who had so grievous a burden laid upon her. In the sick-room his manner had been different; but there his professional instincts were aroused. Here he had to do not with a woman who was ill; on the contrary, Mrs. Palthorpe's health seemed, judging from appearances, to be superb, and he treated her, so argued the spectator, accordingly.

'He must have a nurse,' Doctor Dilton resumed, drawing on his gloves, thoughtfully, as he made this declaration.

'I do not know how she is going to be paid and fed, then,' said Mrs. Palthorpe, flinging the words at him with a fine disregard of reticence and civility.

'I will see to that,' answered the doctor, and in his manner he did not even attempt to conceal the antipathy he felt.

'Of course you must do as you think best,' she replied, more quietly than the unwilling listener expected.

'Yes, I must,' argued the doctor; 'it is too much for you. It would be too much for any person single-handed; and I want to pull him through if I can.'

'Do you not think he would have been far better in the hospital?' she asked, maled perhaps by the allusion to herself.

'Far better,' agreed the doctor, with suspicious readiness.

'So I say,' she remarked.

'Yes; but so he did not say, unfortunately;' and with this retort, the tone of which conveyed much more than the words, he

walked down the short walk and out of the gate without going through the slightest ceremony of leave-taking.

But the stranger was not similarly negligent.

As he bade her farewell, he said very earnestly he hoped her anxieties might soon be lessened.

'It is a terrible trial for you,' he added kindly, and with an appearance of genuine sympathy.

She looked at him suddenly as he spoke—lifted those wonderful eyes for a moment to his, and then in an instant turned her head aside, that he might not see the tears that had started to them all unbidden.

He could not, however, avoid observing her emotion, any more than he could fail to perceive that her lip quivered and her face flushed.

'I wish it were in my power to help you in any way,' he said tentatively.

'No one can help me,' she answered; 'but thank you all the same;' and with a hasty good-morning she turned from him and reentered the house.

He stood looking after her for a second, and might have stood longer had the voice of the doctor not recalled him from dream-land.

'Are you going my way?' asked that gentleman, 'because if so, we may as well walk together.'

'I shall be glad to walk with you,' answered the other, hastily passing out from among the stocks and carnations on to the arid footpath bordering the highway to Romford.

'That is a sad case, doctor,' he remarked, looking back at the cottage, and letting his eyes rest on the windows of the room where the injured man lay.

'Indeed it is; sadder than any outsider could imagine.'

'You seem to take a great interest in Mr. Palthorpe.'

'Well, I do. Theoretically a doctor ought not to care more for one patient than another—ought to write his prescriptions for Hecate with as steady a hand as for Venus—but practically we are as other men, and have our likes and dislikes, our favourites and our aversions. From the time I was called in to see that poor fellow I took a fancy to him. I would give a good deal to keep him alive, though why I should trouble myself so much about it I am sure I do not know. After all, life is often but a doubtful blessing.'

'I should think life might hold a good deal worth having for a man so young as he is. A long future is before him.'

'Possibly, but a past is behind him, certainly.'

'You say that significantly.'

'I meant to say it significantly. He is one of the few men I ever met who risked a fortune for a woman's sake, lost a fortune for a woman's sake, and who is more loyally faithful to the woman now than when he first looked in her face.'

'Was it really so?'

'Really. This is how it came about; there is no secret in the matter: the wife's aunt told me how it happened when she came up after the accident.'

'Excuse my interrupting you for one moment; how did the accident occur?'

'Simply and prosaically enough. He was running to catch an omnibus in Stratford, and did not observe a van trotting round the corner of Angel-lane. Phoo! he was active and well and running across the road one second, and the next he was under the horses' feet with one of the wheels going over him. If the carman had not owned a wrist of iron and pulled

up instantly—I don't know how the fellow did it, I confess, for there is a slight descent at that point—he never could have been picked up alive. As it was they carried him into a chemist's shop close at hand and sent for me. When I saw him I thought there was only one thing to do, and that one thing was to take him to the London Hospital. I confess I did not think he could ever get there; but the chance seemed worth trying, and we were going to risk it, when he opened his eyes and looked at me.

'I saw there was a question and an entreaty in them, so I told him what we were about to do, and that he would receive every care and attention.

'He managed to get out the one word "Home." I thought he had not understood what I said, and so repeated that his best chance lay in being taken to the hospital.

'There came an expression into his eyes I shall never forget; the struggle of despair and agony, with the physical inability to contend against my decision, touched me to the heart. I have attended many men in accidents, but I never met with a case before where the mind seemed to remain so active in a body so crushed and injured.

'I stooped down over him.

"Home," he gasped; "wife."

"Would you rather we took you home?" I asked.

'There came a light into his face that not all the pain he was enduring could darken.

"Remember," I said, "they can do far more for you at the hospital than anywhere else."

"Ah, no,"—I guessed the words almost, for I could scarcely hear him speak.

'Well, how was I to know what sort of house and wife the man

had? A doctor is aware there are homes and homes, and wives and wives, and naturally I thought "he has drawn a prize out of the marriage bag, and if he is to die he may as well die amongst those he loves, and if he is to live he will be sure of good nursing." That was what ran through my mind, and I was just about to look if I could find any card or letter upon him that might give his address, when a little errand-boy, from a grocer's near by, said:

"Please, sir, I know who he is. He lives up the Romford-road, and his name is Palthorpe, that is what it is."

'Well, to cut a long story short, I went on to break the news. A gentleman I knew had been passing at the time, and his brougham stood outside, so we put the boy on the box beside the coachman and told him to stop at the house.

'When I saw the place we have just left my heart misgave me; but it was too late then to repair the mischief, so I went in and saw Mrs. Palthorpe, and told her as carefully as I could what had happened.

'Poor soul, what a shock it must have been! How did she take it, doctor?

The doctor looked with a queer expression at the man who asked this question, but he answered gravely enough:

'Very badly indeed. No; she did not faint or go into hysterics or anything of that sort,' he went on hurriedly, preventing any remark upon his statement, 'but she took it badly. I don't know that I ever knew a woman receive bad tidings in a worse manner. "She won't be of much use as a nurse," I thought; and as for the house—well, you have seen what that is.

'Even now I scarcely know how

he was got up-stairs. Fortunately he had fainted, and remained unconscious till some time after, when he found himself in his own room and lying on his own bed.'

'The scene between husband and wife was dreadfully affecting, I suppose.'

Once more the doctor looked at his companion curiously.

'It affected me, at any rate,' he answered dryly. 'I never felt so sorry for any man before. It was evident he had felt a passionate attachment for her, indeed no one who was not passionately attached to a woman would have made the sacrifice for her he did.'

'Ay, you were going to tell me about that, by the bye.'

'So I was. Miss Aggles, that is Mrs. Palthorpe's aunt, gave me all particulars; but Mrs. Palthorpe herself had led me to believe there was a story.'

'What did she say?' asked the stranger eagerly.

'She never says much to me,' answered the doctor; 'and the way she came to say even what she did was simple enough. I did not think he could live, and so asked her if I should telegraph to his friends.'

"He has none," she answered.

"That is impossible," I said.

"What do you mean?"

"He has none really," she persisted.

"But every one has friends," I answered; "why should he be an exception to all rules?"

"Because he has no money, and because he married me," she declared.

'Of course I could not get over that dead wall, so I changed my tactics.'

"I suppose *you* have friends, though?" I said.

"I have relations, if that is what you mean."

"Should you like me to telegraph to *them*?"

"Yes, I should," she replied, and the strangest expression came into her face; "you can send to Miss Aggles, Sunnysdown Farm, near Ravensmead, Hampshire."

'It was not long before Miss Aggles came up. If crying could have done any good Mr. Palthorpe would now be walking about the neighbourhood. She seemed very sorry for his misfortune, and said her father would do what he could. She told me Mr. Palthorpe's uncle had disinherited him because he married her niece Miranda; that is the lady's Christian name. Young Palthorpe, it appears, married the girl secretly, and the affair was kept quiet for a while.'

'But when the old Squire lay on his deathbed some good-natured friend excited his suspicions, and he sent for his nephew, and told him what he had heard.'

"You know, Tom,"—Miss Aggles told me this—"you know, Tom," he said, "I always vowed I would cut you off with a shilling if you married old Bob Aggles's granddaughter."

'And the young man answered, Yes, he knew that.'

"Well, I have had a will drawn up," the Squire went on, "leaving everything I have in the world to charities; but before signing it I thought I would give you another chance. I don't want any oath or swearing, or that kind of solemnity, but just tell me, Tom, that you won't marry the girl when I am gone, and things shall be between us as they were."

'Everybody thought the Squire was trying to leave him a loophole, for he loved his nephew, and that he wanted him, if he could not answer straightforwardly, to equivocate; but the young fellow

had not any white blood in him, and so he said simply,

"I can't tell you that, uncle ; I am married already."

'They seem to have been a family given to very short sentences, if Miss Aggles's statement is to be depended on, for she declares the only remark the Squire made was,

"I am sorry for it, because I must now sign that will."

'He signed it ; and his lawyer took it away, and young Palthorpe stayed with him till he died. They parted very good friends. The old man fretted, it was thought, about the place passing away out of the family, but he and his nephew never spoke on the subject again.'

'What a singular story !' observed the stranger.

'Yes, is it not ? Come in and have a cup of coffee ; I always keep the materials for coffee handy, so that I can make it for myself.'

'I thank you greatly, but I really want to get to London immediately. I have not had any sleep at all.'

'Well, you do not expect to get any now, I suppose,' said the doctor, to whom sleepless nights appeared the normal condition of human beings.

'I intend to try,' was the answer. 'You have interested me immensely in your patient, doctor. I think I shall have to be in this neighbourhood again in a few days. If I call upon you to ask how he is, will you think me intrusive ?'

'I shall be delighted to see you,' said the doctor heartily. 'You will generally find me at home in the middle of the day. I do not make long rounds. Yes, I shall be very glad to see you. By the way, I don't know your name.'

The stranger put his hand in the breast-pocket of his dress-coat,

as if to feel for his card-case ; but, with an odd sort of confusion, he drew it out again empty.

'Hay,' he said—'John Hay.'

'John Hay,' repeated Doctor Dilton. 'I shall remember that. Good-morning, Mr. Hay, if you won't think better of the coffee, and thank you very much indeed for the help you gave, both to me and my patient.'

'Good-morning,' answered the other ; and the two parted.

As Mr. Hay got well into the Broadway, the sun was shining full upon St. John's Church, the first object in Stratford which meets the stranger's eye.

He paused and looked at the building and the graveyard surrounding it, with a feeling he failed to understand, a sensation he could not analyse.

CHAPTER VII.

A BUNCH OF GRAPES.

NOT a week elapsed before Mr. Hay found himself in Stratford once again. He started thither with the avowed intention of calling upon Mrs. Marker ; but as on his way to the station he met Mr. Marker, who said he had an hour before seen his wife off to Reigate, it was difficult to suppose that lady had much share in influencing his proceedings.

What he did say, however, to himself mentally—because all men try unconsciously to cheat themselves—was, 'I need not return to the office now. As I am so far on my way, I will go on, and ask Doctor Dilton how his patient progresses. Really, I do not know when I felt so interested in any one.'

Which was quite true. He did

feel greatly interested in the man. For the sake of all concerned, it might have been well if his sympathy had proved colder, his pity less keen.

When he reached Stratford, he found it bathed in a glory of golden sunshine. The church, so well placed, which has about it a look of antiquity restored—though not more than fifty years have passed since smithies and other rough buildings of the same kind covered the site now occupied by St. John's, and its graveyard full of quiet tenants—seemed already to the stranger an old acquaintance when he turned out of Angel-lane and came suddenly into the Broadway. The wealth and fashion of that suburb lying so far out due east met him as he paced along the pavement. Well-dressed women, obsequious shopkeepers, carriages drawn by beautiful horses, the trees in the Grove looking more green and refreshing than they had done even in the morning light, the few large houses withdrawn a little from the main thoroughfare, a blue haze mingling with the golden sunbeams, a feeling of languor in the air, an indescribable drowsiness in the aspect of the town, a nameless something wanting in the *entourage* of the place and its inhabitants, a something which seemed to stamp the suburb as remote from London,—all these matters struck Mr. Hay, and impressed him with a sense of vagueness and unreality which did not seem so strange and dreamy subsequently as was the case at the time.

'No; Doctor Dilton went out at two o'clock to a case at Ilford,' the assistant stated, in answer to Mr. Hay's inquiry; 'and it was impossible to say when he would be home. Will you leave your address? He will call round whenever he returns.'

Mr. Hay said he had only come to inquire about one of the doctor's patients.

'Do you,' addressing the assistant, 'happen to know how Mr. Palthorpe is going on?'

'Very slowly,' was the answer—'very slowly indeed.'

'Any better?' questioned the stranger.

'Well, no,' the assistant imagined; he was not much better.

'Any worse?' persisted the other.

'No; Dr. Dilton had not seemed to think he was retrograding.'

'Then you can't tell me at all at what time he may be expected back?' asked Mr. Hay, meaning Dr. Dilton, and not Mr. Palthorpe.

'No, I really cannot.' Concerning that point, at least, the assistant was evidently certain. 'Will you leave any message?'

'You can tell him I called,' answered Mr. Hay; and walked out of the little door at the side of the large house into the bright sunshine.

'As I am here, I may as well go on and inquire how Mr. Palthorpe is for myself,' he thought; and so he walked on straight up the Romford-road, till he arrived at the cottage. There he paused for a moment; but after that instant's hesitation he opened the gate and entered the garden.

It was getting sadly out of order. Just at that time flowers and weeds were growing luxuriantly. Carnations, beaten down by heavy showers, lay helpless over the box-edging; the rose-trees thrust long shoots across the paths; leaves, pink and white and red and blue, shed by the sweet flowers in their dying hours, strewed the ground; some branches of the creepers had blown down, and there was no strong hand now to nail them up again securely. Already, after two nights' rain, the

place began to have a neglected look; already it seemed to miss the care the man now lying sick had lavished upon it. The quick deft hand, the ready pruning-knife, the constant hoe, the busy activity, the loving appreciation,—all these things the tiny garden began to lack, and ere long the insolent weeds and the insidious moss and the fat unctuous snails promised to have matters all their own way, and to make a wilderness of the fair *parterres*.

Mr. Hay looked around him almost with a feeling of pity for the pretty inanimate buds and blossoms that climbing convolvulus and gross docks and detestable cat's-tail were closing around and trying hard to kill. There was one delicate blush-rose of which the caterpillars had made sad havoc, and he noticed a slender lily jostled by the leaves of a stinging-nettle.

It looked like the beginning of the end—a rapid beginning promising a speedy ending. Shelley's description of that neglected garden in which grew a certain sensitive plant was no ideal picture. If a man who has tended his flowers and cared for them and weeded amongst them be sick, his nurselings droop too; if he dies, they soon follow him: the weeds spring up and choke them, as the steps of the wicked track the footprints of the innocent.

Some one, struck with the aspect of coming desolation, had commenced a vain attempt at resistance against the invading army. A small piece of the centre bed had been cleared untidily, and the uprooted intruders flung into a heap on one of the tiny paths, but the effect of this impotent endeavour was only to make the surrounding weeds look taller and more luxuriant.

'Poor creature,' thought Mr.

Hay, referring, of course, to the sick man's wife, 'she has other and more pressing matters to think about;' and he knocked gently—two very modest single raps—at the door, which stood about half-way open.

'Come in!' said a voice from the parlour.

The visitor, knowing he was not the person expected to come in, crossed the threshold, and then paused.

'Come in!' repeated the same voice. 'Don't stand there, whoever you are.'

He took a step or two forward, and then stopped again, hesitating.

At this juncture Mrs. Palthorpe, apparently losing patience, rose from her chair, crossed the room, and looked out into the little passage.

'O, I beg your pardon!' she said, colouring up at sight of her visitor, who felt as much confused as she. 'I never thought—that is, I had no idea— Please come in, sir;' and she led the way into the parlour, and placed a seat, with an appearance of much greater civility than she had evinced on the occasion of their first acquaintance.

He could but look at her. If, when they met before, she had seemed the most beautiful creature eyes ever rested upon, she seemed more lovely still, standing with the light streaming full upon her, and revealing fresh charms of form and feature and colour. She was less at her ease too, less indifferent than she had been during their former interview. She did not resume the chair she had left a minute before, and her hands toyed restlessly amongst the work on which she seemed to have been engaged.

'How is the invalid?' asked Mr. Hay, standing on the opposite side of the Pembroke table—a tall,

stately-looking, not handsome man.

'The doctor says no worse. I think he is not so well; he wanders a good deal.'

'Has he any appetite?'

'He has not; he is always fancying something we have not got, and if we get it the fancy changes.'

'What fine eggs!' remarked Mr. Hay, pointing to a small basket, in which lay nestling amongst moss some eggs laid by the then somewhat rare breed of Spanish hens.

'Yes; I walked up to Dorrody's farm this morning to make sure of having them fresh. The doctor said he ought to have one or two a day beaten up; but he won't touch them—shakes his head, and keeps asking for grapes.'

'Grapes?' repeated Mr. Hay interrogatively.

'Yes, and peaches and nectarines and suchlike. Thinks he is at his old home again—his uncle's house, where they had all those things. I wonder how he imagines we are to get them here.'

'Are they not to be had in this neighbourhood, then?'

'I daresay they are. Most things are to be had in most neighbourhoods by those as have money to pay for them;' and there came a hard bitter look upon her handsome face, the look no woman's countenance wears save when she believes the world has dealt cruelly by her—kept its prizes for others and its drudging poverty for her.

Mr. Hay moved towards the door.

'I daresay I can find some place where such things may be procured,' he said, and would have passed out; but she stopped him.

'I did not speak for that, sir,' she began hurriedly; 'he would not like to take aught from a

stranger, or indeed from a friend, for that matter—'

'But this is such a trifle,' he interposed; 'not worth offering or taking under different circumstances. I know a gentleman in the neighbourhood who has a very fine garden, and I have no doubt he will give me some fruit instantly. Pray do not distress yourself, Mrs. Palthorpe! I want to be of some slight assistance, and you must please let me try to be so. If he has a fancy for fruit, I am certain the doctor would say it ought to be provided for him.'

'That is likely enough,' answered Mrs. Palthorpe, her tone revealing that the old antagonism still existed between herself and her husband's medical attendant. 'He is always saying get this and get that, and let him have everything he wants, just as if we had hundreds in the bank, instead of being without a spare sixpence in the world.'

And into her eyes there came again that wrathful look Mr. Hay had already seen in them, which changed their dusky splendour into flashing fire.

Here was evidently no patient Griselda, no meek creature, who took the buffetings of poverty in good part, and learnt the lessons of adversity as a docile child cons its spelling-book. Quite the contrary, indeed. And yet the rebellious defiant expression gave such a new character to her beauty, such an exquisite colour to her cheek, deepened so much the intensity of those dark wonderful eyes, that the man must have been strangely constituted who on a first acquaintance had wished this fair woman more contented with her lot, more chary of giving utterance to her dissatisfaction.

Mr. Hay did not, at all events. He regarded the little outbreak as he would have viewed the petu-

lance of a lovely child. He felt sorry for Mrs. Palthorpe, and yet she amused him.

'She is so natural,' he thought, 'and so beautiful. This small matter,' he said, answering the spirit of her words rather than the words themselves, 'will cost you nothing, and me nothing either, save a little time and a pleasant walk.'

'You are very kind,' she returned; 'but he would not like it. If he knew, he would be wild angry; I am sure he would.'

The expression jarred more upon Mr. Hay's taste than her envious discontent had upon his judgment. In a moment it recalled the social gulf her husband had overleapt, and all he had lost for the sake of love and beauty.

The great pity which stirred his heart when he stood in that mean room beside the young fellow so suddenly stricken down welled up in it again. He would help him, he would help them both—the husband to health and the wealth the wife desired so evidently.

No longer should they wage this terrible battle with poverty; the man must be cared for, by some means money should be given to him. It was dreadful to think of his lying through those long summer days, craving with parched lips for luxuries most persons would have regarded as easily obtainable—luxuries this woman, for whose fair face he had fallen from affluence, seemed to consider as impossible to procure as though he had asked for the fabled apples of the Hesperides.

'When your husband is well enough to know anything about the matter,' said Mr. Hay, in answer to her hurried refusal, 'he will not, I am sure, feel vexed at your permitting me to get him a few grapes. My friend does not

live far from here. I shall be back again almost directly.' And without giving her time to raise any further objection he left the room and the house, passed through the gate overshadowed by the great Portuguese laurel, and, turning to the right, walked for some distance along the straight high-road leading to Romford.

When he got to St. Emmanuel's Church, however, he stopped suddenly. There four ways afforded ample choice to any pedestrian smitten with indecision—to the south lay Upton Cross, to the north Forest Gate, to the east Ilford, to the west Stratford, and beyond Stratford, London. Where was he going? where had he intended going when he quitted Mrs. Palthorpe?

Not to his friend's house assuredly; he knew that fact certainly now. Never for a moment had he intended asking Mr. Marker or Mr. Marker's gardener for fruit of any kind; on the other hand, he was vaguely aware some idea of finding a nursery-ground must have passed through his mind.

'There ought to be plenty of such places about here,' he considered. But then he looked at the aspect of the country round about, and felt doubtful.

Cabbages in plenty, fields of them, acres of them; potatoes by the ton; mangel-wurzel enough to have fed all the cows in London; farmhouses, gentlemen's houses, public-houses; but no sign of any habitation where a grower or seller of grapes could by possibility be supposed to dwell.

When once Mr. Hay took a matter in hand, he was a man not easily baffled; so he bent his steps to an adjacent tavern, and asked the landlord, who chanced to be standing in the doorway, if he could direct him to any one

in the neighbourhood who sold fruit.

'Ah, you won't get any nearer nor Stratford,' answered mine host. 'On Sundays there is a man who has a stall up near the Eagle, close to the Flats; but he is never there through the week.'

Very patiently Mr. Hay explained he did not desire such specimens of horticulture as are alone generally obtainable from the proprietor of a stall.

'Grapes,' he finished persuasively, 'are what I most require—grapes for a sick person. Now tell me where I should probably be able to buy them.'

The landlord paused; he was anxious to afford information, but he could scarcely impart a knowledge he did not himself possess.

'If you wanted apples, now,' he observed at length, 'a few bushels of them, or damsons for preserving. Come now, sir, what do you say to damsons?'

Mr. Hay shook his head, and said damsons would not do at all.

'That is a pity,' was the comment; 'because I could direct you to a rare place for them, out Chadwell way. You know Chadwell, don't you?'

Mr. Hay was obliged to confess he did not.

'Well, but you could easily find it. You could take the train to Ilford and walk across; that is the best way. Anybody will tell you where old Mr. Bastow lives. Bless you, he is as well known as the sexton! Tell him I sent you; and if you don't want to buy anything, he'll let you walk round his orchard, ay, and fill your pockets too, if you like, and not charge a halfpenny.'

'I am sure you are very kind,' said Mr. Hay, much perplexed by this unexpected friendliness; 'but at the present moment I want grapes, and not apples. And if

you could tell me of any one who sells them in the neighbourhood, I should really feel greatly obliged.'

'Grapes!' repeated the man, as though he had been asked for diamonds, and was considering whether about that part of Essex he could think of any likely mine; 'grapes! Missus,' and he turned towards his better half, who was in the bar, 'do you know anybody as sells grapes hereabouts?'

'No, I don't,' answered the lady curtly. 'All the folks about here likely to buy grapes has them of their own, and so of course nobody sells them. The gentleman won't get them nearer than London; at least, I think he'll save time by going there for them.'

The landlord listened to this remark with an air of considerable interest. When his wife had quite concluded he faced round upon Mr. Hay, closed one eye completely, pointed one finger backward over his shoulder solemnly, and said, 'You hear her! She's right!' and then smiled benignly.

Mr. Hay felt the advice to be so good, that he immediately resolved to put it in practice; and having thanked both husband and wife, and received some further counsel as to his route, started off briskly towards Forest Gate. Arrived there, he saw the train steaming quietly out of the station, and had to make the best of his way to Stratford, where the porter informed him he would be sure to catch either a 'main' or a 'branch.'

As he walked thither he passed a fruiterer's shop, and stopped for a moment to ask if the owner could supply him with what he wanted.

'I have not any this afternoon,' said that individual, 'but to-morrow I might have some; or if you could wait till the day after, I

shall be going to Covent Garden, and—'

'Thank you ; but I must have them to-day,' interrupted Mr. Hay, thinking Stratford seemed very far from London indeed.

Arrived at the station, then dirtier and smokier and more unutterably miserable than the mind of any traveller on that line can now conceive, he found it would be twenty minutes before an up-train was due ; and accordingly he addressed himself to one of the inspectors, in the faint hope that he might know of some local Garden of Eden, filled with all manner of rare and delicate fruit.

'Grapes !' repeated that functionary, exactly as the publican had done. 'Grapes ! You might get them at Frazer's, Lea Bridge way or Tottenham. I think they would be sure to grow such things at Tottenham.'

Mr. Hay turned away in despair.

'What a benighted place !' he thought.

Two hours later he was again walking up the Romford-road, which had already grown strangely familiar to him, when he met Doctor Dilton.

'Ah !' exclaimed that gentleman, stopping him, for Mr. Hay scarcely recognised his medical acquaintance in a more rigid toilette than that in which he had appeared in answer to his hasty summons, on the morning when he first beheld him. 'I have just been hearing about you. Mrs. Palthorpe said you had gone to get some grapes. Found your friend out, I suppose.'

Looking a little disconcerted, Mr. Hay confessed he had never gone near his friend's place.

The doctor laughed.

'Why, that is just my case,' he remarked. 'I don't know a rich man about here I would ask

for a grape, let alone for a whole bunch ; and yet I daresay they would give me the best they possessed willingly enough.'

'I am sure my friend would do me,' retorted Mr. Hay, a little nettled. 'It was not any idea of that sort prevented my going to his house.'

'O, indeed !' said the doctor, as an encouragement for the other to proceed ; but Mr. Hay did not take the hint.

'I thought I would rather buy them,' he explained awkwardly.

'It was very good of you,' observed Doctor Dilton, sharp enough to see there was a hitch somewhere. 'You have been to London, I see.'

'How do you see, if I may inquire?' asked Mr. Hay.

'Easily enough ; we don't do things in such style down East ;' and he pointed to the carefully tied-up baskets with which Mr. Hay was laden. 'I am so sorry you should have had all this trouble. It is unfortunate I did not chance to be in the way, for there is a gardener down Vicarage-lane who sells very good hothouse fruit indeed at a moderate price.'

'Where is Vicarage-lane?' asked Mr. Hay ; not because he wanted in the least to know, but simply because he felt he must say something.

'It leads to West Ham,' answered the doctor. 'But don't let me keep you standing here ; I will turn back with you.'

'How is your patient?' inquired Mr. Hay, as they strolled along side by side.

'He does not gain ground,' was the answer : 'he is not worse—not really worse, I mean—but that is all I can say. He has a good nurse too, now ; he ought to get on better than he does.'

'Is he fretting about anything?'

'I do not think so ; he is too

ill to fret, I fancy; but it is hard to say. I often find that, if any cause of trouble exists, a sort of unconscious fretting goes on quite beyond the power of will or reason. For instance, if a man be harassed the harass continues even during sleep; and it may be the same, for aught I can tell, in severe sickness.'

'It seems a hard case that a man should long for a few grapes, and not be able to get them immediately,' said Mr. Hay, who had been pursuing his own line of thought whilst the doctor was speaking.

'It does,' agreed that gentleman dryly. He was a little put out by the small amount of attention which had been paid to his remarks, and he was thinking also of some new ribbons and soft tulle lying on the table at the cottage when he went there, the while his patient was complaining no one would go out and gather some of the apricots from the south wall, or fetch him a bunch of the sweet-water grapes that grew in the further vinery.

'Making a bonnet, Mrs. Palthorpe?' he had asked, as he watched her busy fingers tacking the tulle on a coquettish little shape.

'Yes,' she answered ungraciously.

'Is it not a pity to take so much trouble—yet?'

He knew it was an abominable question to put—bitter, cruel, unprofessional; but he felt impelled to put it.

She looked at him sharply, and then averted her eyes.

'If I don't make it now, I need not make it at all,' she answered scornfully. 'Lace bonnets are not any good at Christmas.'

'I think of asking one of the surgeons at the London Hospital to come down and have a look at

my patient,' went on Doctor Dilton, after he had decided not to make any mention of his conversation to his companion. 'He ought to get on better than he does. It won't cost anything, you know,' he added hastily.

'You intend to ask for *that* fruit, then?' suggested Mr. Hay.

'Yes; I do not mind putting myself under an obligation of that sort to a fellow-professional.'

'Of course I am quite a stranger to these people,' began Mr. Hay hesitatingly, 'and I should not like to offer them money.'

The doctor nodded.

'But if I left a certain sum with any one—you, for instance,' he went on more boldly—'could not you use it for Mr. Palthorpe's benefit as might be required?'

Doctor Dilton shook his head.

'I could not,' he answered, 'and, to be quite plain, if I could I would not. Such a charge would be quite out of my line; I never did such a thing, and I believe I may say I never will. It is very kind of you to think of giving assistance, but if I were you I should not offer help. When a man is down, you have to deal with a woman, and I always imagine it is best to have no dealings with women.'

'Surely, however, there are exceptions to all rules,' suggested Mr. Hay, feeling a little vexed and a great deal as if he had received a sudden slap in the face.

'There may be,' answered the doctor, 'but I should not imagine Mrs. Palthorpe to be that exception. In the first place, even if a person don't admire her, she is far too handsome—she is undeniably handsome, you know; and in the next, there is something about her I don't understand and that I don't want to understand.'

'What is it like?' asked Mr. Hay, with an assumption of care-

lessness; while, absurd though it may seem, the doctor's words pierced his vanity as if they had been directed against himself.

'I don't know: you have not seen her angry as I have. It is not professional for me to talk in this way; but if one sees a danger-signal and another man does not, it is but fair to call his attention to it. I was talking about Mrs. Palthorpe; if you ever make her angry, or if anybody else makes her angry in your presence, look at her eyes.'

Mr. Hay had seen her angry and looked at her eyes, and he knew what was coming.

'When thunder is about, there is often one black cloud in which fire seems hidden, and you can tell that lightning is lying there biding its time. When she is annoyed there is a fire in Mrs. Palthorpe's eyes just like that. Whether it means much I can't tell; all I do know is, I should not care to be in the line of the lightning when it struck.'

There was a dead silence for a

moment. Mr. Hay was the first to break it.

'We shall have more rain, I fancy,' he remarked.

'I hope so, it will do good,' answered the doctor. And as he spoke he stopped at the gate of the cottage, where certainly Mr. Palthorpe's flowers looked all the worse for the late heavy showers.

'Would you mind—would you be so kind as just to take these things in for me?' then said Mr. Hay hurriedly, as if he had been walking fast and was out of breath. 'I—I don't want to go in this evening; it—is getting late, and I would rather not intrude.'

'I won't go in again either. I'll leave them and be with you in a moment,' said the doctor. And taking the baskets, filled so daintily with fruit, he walked up to the door, looking very thoughtful and perplexed.

'Will he stay away now,' he considered, 'or will he come again? With all my heart and soul I hope he won't come again.'

KEEPING UP APPEARANCES.

MAN is very like the butterfly in his faculty of assimilating himself with his surroundings. We are told that the variety of colours to be observed on the wings of a butterfly is due to the different herbs and flowers it selects for its food. In like manner men reflect in their life and tastes the spirit of the age in which they live. In the old martial days men were soldiers, or they were nothing—proud of the right to bear arms and of the followers who swelled their retinue. In the superstitious days men affected to be bookish, and to be under the influence of the lore of the schools. In the fop-pish days men thought it incumbent upon themselves to care only for lace and ruffles, paint and powder, and 'the nice conduct of a clouded cane.' So we, who now have the happiness to live under the rule of a plutocracy, are content with nothing less than an imitation of the luxury and wealth of our neighbour. No matter what our income is, or what our social position be, we must affect, by our airs and establishment, to be quite on a level with the surroundings of the plutocrat. We might occupy a modest tenement, healthy and well built, the rent of which would exactly suit the tenuity of our purse; but as it does not happen to be situated in a fashionable neighbourhood, we must pinch and stint to take up our quarters in hastily run-up houses near the haunts patronised by 'the swells.' If we cannot keep a carriage we must at least

pay a heavy bill to the stable-keeper round the corner for the use of that slow and ill-hung conveyance called a fly. We must give dinners, contracted at so much a head from the confectioner, with the greengrocer in to wait, and perhaps the aid of a friend's footman to make our limited establishment look more like the real thing. We send our daughters to superior scholastic seminaries, where they learn a great deal of useless knowledge, and our sons to crack public schools, where they acquire expensive tastes, and learn, if they learn anything, to be ashamed of the comparative humbleness of their father's station. Though we are the veriest of earthen pots we must sail down the stream with our neighbour, cast perhaps out of the most precious metals, and scheme and lie and deceive to conceal the commonness of our delf-ware, and affect to be, if not genuine silver, at least electro-plate.

Nor is this mania for assuming to be what we are not difficult to be accounted for. The introduction of commerce into the ranks of the gentle has, as was to be expected, made the influence of a plutocracy most felt in what is called general society. In the old days, when blood kept itself to itself, and only genius was admitted within its cold and exclusive circles, hospitalities were conducted in a simpler and more modest fashion; the style of furniture was quieter, the establish-

ment less numerous, the dinners less pretentious, and the whole mode of life was arranged on a plainer and less artificial basis. But with the usurpation of money, ostentation was inevitable. There never was a time in our domestic history when wealth has been more lavishly pressed into the service of pride and hospitality than at the present day. House-rents in the new region of South Kensington are an income; the dinners to which we are invited seem to have for their object not how many dishes we can eat, but how many we can send away; not a ball can be given but the most extravagant of floral decorations are indulged in. And then the prices we pay for our horses, our carriages, our yachts, our hounds, our fancy stock, our china, *bric-à-brac*, chiming clocks, antique furniture, mirrors, pictures, rare editions, and all the rest of the luxuries and requirements that follow in the train of a plutocracy! We complain of the cost of living; rather we should complain of the rate of living. The one thing, and the only one thing, on which a young Englishman spends less than his grandfather is in dress—the wigs, the ruffles, the velvet, the lace, the jewelled sword, are things of the past, and their abolition, though a sad matter for the tailor, is a source of great gratification to his customer. When an elderly man recalls the days of his youth, and thinks of the dinners he ate, the balls he danced at, the old family coach in which he drove out, the prices he paid for his dogs and his hunters, the modest manner in which he returned the hospitalities he received, he must feel as if he were not only living in another age, but in another country. Ostentation—the ostentation which is to wealth what

the pedigree is to birth—is written in lurid letters upon all our acts. Comfort, a graceful kindness, an attentive hospitality, still exist; but their presence is scarcely perceptible, thanks to the vanity and vulgarity of ostentation. We give dinners, not so much to entertain our friends as to display the cunning of our cook, which means money; the great people we can collect together, which also means money; the pictures on the walls, our plate, our servants, our wine, the perfect appointments of our house, all which, being interpreted, signify money—money, and ‘Who are you? and I, your host, can buy you up, and am as good as anybody.’ We crowd our rooms, not because we wish to see our friends, but to show the extent of our acquaintance, and because the greatest misery of the greatest number is a social decreas at balls and receptions, which must not be disputed. We fill our country houses like an hotel; we preserve till sport and slaughter are the same thing; we fill our stables with valuable horses, even if we dare not ride them; we keep a team, though, perhaps, a friend has to drive it; in spite of our sea-sickness we hoist our club-flag, and own a two-hundred-ton yacht. From Dan to Beersheba it is not waste, but prodigality, profusion, and a luxury so unbounded and elaborate that it ceases to be comfort.

Nor do matters end here. Let the rich spend as they like; they must stand or fall according to their own consciences. But where wealth rules supreme its throne will inevitably be surrounded by a host of imitators. The frog must try to swell himself to the size of the bull, and the earthenware vessel will insist upon sailing down the social stream with his metallic superior. Since wealth is

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the standard of excellence, many will pretend either to be richer than they are or better than they are. The vinegar will call itself *vin ordinaire*; the *vin ordinaire* will affect to be Lafitte; and the Lafitte would give all the juices of its grape to be considered '42 port. Your earthenware pot, with his few hundreds a year, must attempt the glitter of the silver vase; with an indifferent cook and a limited establishment he must forsooth imitate the dinners of the plutocrat; his wife and daughters must dress as wealthy fashion dictates; he must quit town, no matter at what pecuniary inconvenience, at a certain season in the year; in short, he must keep up appearances.

When the social history of the latter part of the nineteenth century comes to be written, it will be found that a large share of the unhealthy speculations afloat, of the frauds of directors of City companies, of the card scandals and turf tricks that have of late been so prevalent, is due entirely to the haste after wealth and the keeping up of so-called appearances—appearances which have not unfrequently ended in club expulsion, the Court of Bankruptcy, and the prison-cell. Whichever side we look, we see the knee bent and the hand outstretched to attain a higher rung on the social ladder. The honest yeoman, whose fathers have farmed for generations the same old acres, now transforms his farmhouse into a modern villa, teaches his daughters French and music, regards the bucolic swagger of his son as a sign of independence, and brings up his family so that they are discontented with their own position, yet not fitted to enter the class above them. Who has not seen in village parish churches these damsels gaily attired in a burlesque of the

Paris fashions, smarting because they are ignored by the ladies of the squire and the daughters of the parson, the doctor, and the attorney? Well might the genial old pagan cry out: How comes it to pass that no one lives content with his condition? The peasant wishes to be a farmer, the farmer wishes to be a landed gentleman, and the landed gentry often covet the blood-red hand of the baronet or the coronet of the peer. A change has taken place in the name of things very expressive of the ambition and restless discontent around us. The working man is an artisan, the shop is an emporium, the counter-jumper is an assistant, the tradesman is an artist, the traveller is a commercial gentleman, the clerk is an *employé*, and the 'young person' is a young lady. Not to be called esquire or a gentleman amounts almost at the present day to a complimentary distinction.

Thanks to the examples set us by a plutocracy, an air of wealth and fashion is stamped, or essayed to be stamped, upon every member of the community. The young man, whose father dined at a tavern for eighteenpence, went half-price to the pit, and put on his dress clothes only on great state occasions, now dines at his club in evening costume, educates his taste as to dry champagne, and pays half-a-guinea for his stall at the theatre. If he has the means, there is no difficulty in his gratifying his tastes; if he has not the means, he must obtain them by superior skill in billiards, pigeon-shooting, whist or *écarté*, or by running into debt. If he is genial and popular, he can toady the rich; if he have a handle to his name, he can let himself out to second-rate plutocrats, who will feed him, mount him, and occasionally lend him money; but, at

whatever cost to his self-respect or hazard to his honour, he must 'be in the swim,' and do as other men do. 'Rem si possis recte; si non, quocunque modo rem,' is his maxim.

Society is man's leisure but woman's profession, it was therefore to be expected that the new order of things would cause a revolution in the habits and aspirations of the female sex. At the present day a magnificent career of social successes is offered to a woman of wealth and tact. She need not be a beauty, she need not be high-born; she need but spend her husband's money with profusion, and choose her friends with judgment. There is still a Faubourg St. Germain amongst us; but it is the Faubourg St. Honoré which gives the better dinners, the more brilliant balls, drives the more splendid horses, is the easier of access, and consequently is the more popular court, receiving the greater amount of homage. To be admitted into the plutocracy you require but wealth; to lead it wealth must be allied with rank—which does not necessarily imply birth—or with beauty or with wit. To the clever wife of the plutocrat, society is as open as is the Bar to an ambitious advocate. She labours under no disabilities which cannot be removed by gold. She will be received at Court, her husband can obtain a seat in the House of Commons, she will attend Ministerial receptions, there is nothing to prevent her one day giving them. If her dinners are good, she will never lack the guests she desires; if at her balls the right people are always found, the floor in good condition, and the supper excellent, our gilded youth will not stay away; in the autumn her country house will be full; provided she spends money, suc-

cess and troops of friends will attend her path. If she be witty or beautiful, she can afford to spend less; if she be vulgar, she must spend more: social distinction has been reduced to a mere question of arithmetic. None of the restrictions which in former times existed are now in force. A presentation at Court has ceased to be a distinction; dames may attend every drawing-room, men may attend every *levée*, yet never be asked to State ball or concert. Save for the most open of all hospitalities, the fact of presentation is of little service on the Continent, except it be accompanied by personal introductions to the ambassador or other representative of English interests. There is no high-born clique or powerful coterie ruling the social world with iron sway, and requiring all who seek for admission to do homage and present their credentials. Society is but a general shuffle of the human pack, where the two of spades can hang on to the queen of diamonds, and the knave is everywhere. The clever woman or the ambitious man, willing and capable of defraying the necessary expenditure, needs never despair of admission into its elastic circle, and one day may even hope to obtain supremacy. The days of Almack's are fled, and have been succeeded by the days of Prince's and the Orleans Club.

Thus the social equality that exists amongst us at the present time is at the root of this straining after appearances. Everybody is as good as everybody else, and no one will honestly acknowledge that he has a superior. The man of wealth considers himself as good as the peer, for, thanks to his banker's book, the plutocrat can do everything that the aristocrat aims at. The man of small means, and perhaps with a little

gentle blood in his veins, feels his pride hurt when he sees his neighbour, whom he regards as his inferior, living in a superior style, and forthwith he strains every nerve to 'cut the vulgar snob out.' Our friend 'Arry reads in the journals of society the doings of the upper classes, fancies he dresses himself like a 'swell,' and abjures the companionship of his brother clerks. To be modest, and to acknowledge yourself poor and not be ashamed of the fact, are to cut yourself off from the world at large and to live alone. It is true that a man, by this honest and manly conduct, will maintain his sense of self-respect, and be free from all the anxieties and annoyances of the pretender; but in this world it is not given to every one to have the courage which true nobility of character always inspires.

Yet, after all, the shifts and schemes that have been planned and carried out by him who 'keeps up appearances,' upon whom do they impose? There are men who lie, yet never deceive, and the keeper-up of appearances is one of these. Who is taken in by the effort of the struggling professional man to hold his own with his wealthier neighbour; by the small provincial man who pretends that he is 'of the county,' by him who lives by his wits, yet pretends to exist by the solid advantages of a good private property, or by all the dodges, meannesses, and base tricks of the

social impostor? If men only knew that their own designs are as plainly seen through as they themselves see through the schemes of their neighbour, there would be more of truth and less of sham in the world. No one ever lowered himself by openly admitting what his means really were, and the actual position he occupied in the social scale; whilst every man who has pretended to be other than he was has been found out, and has made himself the subject of ridicule. There is nothing despicable in truth; it is only sham and pretence that are unworthy. If you are poor, there is no necessity to vaunt your poverty; but you deceive no one but yourself in affecting to be rich, whilst the day of reckoning will assuredly come. Keeping up appearances is only an elegant phrase for 'letting somebody else in.' Hence the Nemesis of debts, disgrace, and perhaps the dungeon. A life of worry, of pretentious extravagance, ever followed by a severe and mean economy, of secrecy always in fear of exposure; with self-respect, true manliness, and all sense of comfort completely gone—these are the results of the keeping up of appearances. All of us have different views of life, but, to our imperfect gaze, this game is not worth the candle. We never yet met the man who kept up appearances whom, in the long-run, appearances ever succeeded in keeping.

LOVE AND WAR.*

By R. MOUNTENEY JEPHSON,

AUTHOR OF 'TOM BULLKLEY OF LISSINGTON,' 'A PINK WEDDING,' ETC.

CHAPTER I.

'Don't talk nonsense, Georgina! I maintain that Puddleton is making itself utterly contemptible.'

Thus spake, with considerable, though I am sorry to add not unusual, asperity, Joshua Buddlecombe, Esquire, the worshipful mayor of Puddleton. Of course the reader has heard of Puddleton, for Puddleton is famous for the manufacture of buttons; and who is there amongst us so dead to his own comfort or to the opinions of others as to forswear the use of those little articles? As Mr. Buddlecombe delivered this remark he took up a dogmatic position on his hearthrug—for there can be dogmatism in a position as well as in a proposition—and surveyed with a don't-you-dare-to-contradict-me glare his wife, to whom he had just addressed the marital injunction, 'don't talk nonsense.' Mrs. Buddlecombe, in whose mind familiarity with these humours had bred, if not contempt, at all events a certain amount of indifference to them, merely shrugged her shoulders and calmly continued her knitting.

'Notwithstanding all my efforts as the mayor of this town,' continued Mr. Buddlecombe, evidently working himself up into a rage, and, as far as could be judged

from his countenance, he had not to work very hard,—'notwithstanding indignation meetings convened by me, and protests and petitions and representations, Puddleton is made a military quarter; and instead of resenting the injury, Puddleton dresses itself out in flags and determines upon giving a public welcome to these "Crimean heroes," as it chooses to dub those red-coated drumming and trumpeting individuals, who have just been practising their legalised trade of wholesale murder on a pretty large scale.'

'Nonsense, Joshua; think of the glory!' said Mrs. Buddlecombe, waving a knitting-needle with the air of a conquering heroine.

'Nonsense, Georgina; think of the depression in the button trade!' rejoined Mr. Buddlecombe. 'Now if soldiers were habitually to fire away their buttons in action, war wouldn't be such an utterly senseless proceeding as it is now. I repeat that, with the advent this day of the military, Puddleton falls morally; and my year's tenure of office, instead of being the brightest page, is for ever a blot on the hitherto unspotted annals of Puddleton.'

'Well,' said Mrs. Buddlecombe, 'I beg to state that on *my* part I am delighted to see that Puddleton is capable of such patriotism.'

'Pshaw!' ejaculated Mr. Buddlecombe.

'Yes, Joshua, I repeat I am

* The author reserves to himself the right of dramatising this story, or any portion of it.

delighted. From my experience of the place I really thought that Puddleton's soul was incapable of rising above buttons and their manufacture. I am glad, however, to find that the sordid employment of making buttons, to which Puddleton, from the lowest to the highest, from the youngest to the oldest inhabitant, is addicted, has not deadened its mind to all feelings of glory and patriotism.'

'Stuff and nonsense!' spluttered Mr. Buddlecombe, red with wrath, and further manifesting his indignation by blowing out his cheeks and rumpling up his hair all over his head. 'The idea of disparaging the virtuous, the ingenious, the useful employment of making buttons, and glorifying the disgraceful calling of slashing and cutting and shooting your fellow-creatures! It's outrageous! To hear such sentiments proceed from the lips of any woman would be shocking; but when that woman is a lady, and that lady is a mayoress, and that mayoress is the wife of my bosom, it makes me tingle from head to foot with shame!'

Mrs. Buddlecombe was not in the least awed by this flowing climax.

'That sounds all very well, I daresay, Joshua, as a rhetorical display; but then, too, it's also very like a display of fireworks—a great deal of fizzing and spluttering, and then a bang, leaving every one in the dark. I maintain that making buttons is an utterly contemptible occupation compared with that of defending your country at the risk of your life. What,' concluded Mrs. Buddlecombe, rising from her seat with the dignity befitting a mayoress,—'what would society be without its defenders, Joshua?'

'What would society be without

its buttons, Georgina? I blush to think of society in a buttonless condition.'

And here the virtuous Mayor of Puddleton assumed an air of awful propriety.

'You're really too ridiculous, Joshua,' retorted Mrs. Buddlecombe, as she walked to a low French window and looked out into the garden, partly to see if her daughter, Florence Buddlecombe, were returning from her morning's ride, and partly to hide her own chagrin at having, perhaps, got rather the worst of the little argument on the society question. 'And you are so illogical, Joshua; so provokingly illogical. Soldiers must be somewhere; and if they were not at Puddleton they would have to be at some other town. So they might just as well be here as anywhere else.'

'Not at all,' snapped Mr. Buddlecombe, turning sharp round on his wife. 'Soldiers should be nowhere. They shouldn't exist. What's a standing army but a standing slur on civilisation, a perpetual menace to peace and goodwill amongst men, a dangerous tool in the hands of ambition, a gigantic fraud on the ratepayer, a fierce seething whirlpool of temptation, into which—'

'My dear, my dear, if you won't think of me, think of apoplexy and drop the subject. If you look at that mirror behind, you'll be positively startled at your appearance.'

'Don't dare to make me the subject of your buffoonery, Georgina,' said the irascible gentleman; 'and don't dare to interrupt me either. If I am red in the face it is with blushing for you. I shall not, however, for the sake of a few gross personalities on your part, outrage all that is great and noble in my nature by denying it that

outlet which, in its very proper indignation, it demands. I *shall* have my say! What is the whole army, to put it in its mildest light, but a ridiculous anomaly? We visit punishment with the utmost rigour of the law on the heads of wretched prize-fighters, who only maul each other about with their fists; and yet we maintain, at an enormous expense, thousands upon thousands of an infinitely more noxious variety of the species whose recognised business is slaughter and carnage, with every description of deadly engine that misdirected science can invent for their use. I employ the expression "*misdirected science*" advisedly. From a careful calculation which I have made with the view to exposing, by means of my next pamphlet, the unspeakable iniquity of war in, perhaps, its most shocking light, I find that a 68-pounder gun—which, I am told, is now the *chef-d'œuvre* of murderous invention—would furnish enough material for exactly 1,341,537 metal buttons of the largest size we turn out—such buttons in fact as might be supplied to charity-schools.

This last reflection was so painful that Mr. Buddlecombe paused, and, with a deep sigh, sought consolation in his snuff-box.

'How much more noble,' he continued, in somewhat calmer, though sad, tones, as nasal titillation shed its soothing influence over his soul,—'how much more in accordance with the true fitness of things, if Government had converted all this mass of metals into such buttons'—here he took a final pinch of snuff, accompanied by the gentle soliloquy—'and given me the contract. I have calculated that, allowing eight buttons for each boy—six in front and two behind—I could provide, out of a 68-pounder gun, buttons

for 167,692 boys, and one button over. What a contrast do the two pictures afford! In the one, ghastly hecatombs of slain; in the other, 167,692 smiling, chubby-cheeked charity-boys with eight bright buttons apiece, and one button over. Is not the reflection that the former picture is the chosen one enough to wring the heart of any right-thinking man, woman, or child? Is not this, I say, enough—'

'Quite, Joshua,' said Mrs. Buddlecombe. 'I say so too. Quite enough. No more, thank you.'

'In spite of these unseemly interruptions, Georgina, I shall continue to speak out my mind,' said the worshipful gentleman to whom degenerate Puddleton had turned a deaf ear on this subject, and who therefore, like most orators who cannot obtain a hearing abroad, made the most of his grievance at home. Not that he got much sympathy there, but still he could command an audience in the shape of his wife, and he exercised his prerogative. 'O Georgina,' he continued, 'it cuts me to the heart to contemplate this return for my devotion. Is it for this that I am ever ready to be your slave and to victimise myself for you? I go out to dinner-parties frequently with you.'

'Only where there's a good cook, Joshua.'

'I do not pretend to be an angel, Georgina. I am only mortal. And it is as one mortal speaking to another that I now attempt to awaken in your heart some sense of duty you owe. Think of the sacrifices I make for your sake, and of the constant attention I show you. I give you beforehand all the speeches I am going to make on different occasions. I drink to your health frequently in the best of wine. I sometimes smoke a choice cigar in the even-

ings after dinner in order that your senses may be pleasantly regaled with the delicate aroma. O, do you know the ingratitude of woman is shocking, shocking! Then again, don't I often—'

'Pray don't continue the harrowing narration,' said Mrs. Buddlecombe, with a provoking assumption of extreme contrition. 'I am quite aware, Joshua, of the fearful infliction it is to you to eat a good dinner, especially when you're very hungry, which it seems to me you always are; and of the beautiful self-abnegation you evince when indulging in the delightful pastime of playing at Bright and Gladstone; and of the violence you do to your feelings, as a confirmed smoker, when you inhale the fragrant fumes of a choice havanna. O Joshua, what a heartrending picture you have drawn of the terrible sacrifices you make for my sake! It's quite affecting. It's more than I can bear.'

Here Mrs. Buddlecombe buried her face in her handkerchief, and gave vent to a succession of ironical sobs, which gradually developed into an uncontrollable burst of hearty laughter.

The mayor's wrath was terrible to see; for irony and ridicule are the two keenest shafts that pierce the human soul.

'Georgina,' he exclaimed, 'there is not the noblest action of self-sacrifice from which, if I were to perform it, you would not withhold all credit on the grounds that it was done to please myself. I verily do believe that if I were to lay my head down on the block this moment and have it cut off for your sake, your first remark would be, "O, he *likes* it. Laying his head down on the block and having it cut off has ever been his favourite pastime from childhood's earliest years."

Mrs. Buddlecombe merely smiled contemptuously; upon which Mr. Buddlecombe, with increased acrimony, was just taking up another parable, when the sweet fresh voice of a young girl, warbling some joyous little ditty, floated through the open French window. Breaking in upon Mr. Buddlecombe's querulous tones it was like the playful tinkling of a lambkin's bell after the fussy gruff barks of the old sheep-dog.

'There's Florry come in from her morning's ride,' said Mrs. Buddlecombe.

'Yes; now you'll be good enough not to introduce the military topic before her, Georgina,' said Mr. Buddlecombe grimly. 'No more rides for her alone with old Reins, the coachman, now that the neighbourhood will be infested by reprobates in regimentals, I can tell her!'

As the worshipful mayor of Puddleton pronounced this sentence he took up his newspaper and seated himself in an easy-chair. He had just settled down to the money article when the fair young warbler appeared at the open window, and arrested her footsteps and her song to stand surveying her parents with a playful demeanour, which, as regarded Mr. Buddlecombe, was not reciprocated. Florence Buddlecombe was an only child, and was still at the proverbially sweet age of seventeen, though in candour it must be added that she was just on the eve of her eighteenth birthday. With her soft blue eyes, her fair complexion, and her hair,

'A golden mesh to entrap the hearts of men,'

she would have carried off the palm for beauty in most assemblages of pretty girls. Then, too, she was an heiress; and when

viewed from this standpoint, she was supernaturally lovely. She had normally a sweet bright expression, but on this especial morning a heart filled with a secret joy illumined her countenance until it was radiant with health, beauty, and happiness.

As she stood at the French window, her lithe figure shown off to the greatest advantage in her close-fitting riding-habit, a jaunty hat perched knowingly on her well-shaped little head, her eyes dancing with joy, her cherry lips parted into a smile which showed the whitest and evenest row of teeth imaginable, and her soft cheeks aglow with the exercise in the fresh morning air, she formed a sweet picture, at which Mrs. Buddlecombe gazed with fond and admiring eyes, but which only drew from Mr. Buddlecombe a low growl that he didn't know what she had to grin about so this morning, as he glanced at the fair vision from over the top of his newspaper.

It must not be supposed that Mr. Buddlecombe was always thus—a bear with a sore head. The fact is that the reader, while having had the honour of introduction to so great a personage as the Mayor of Puddleton, has also had the misfortune to make that magnate's acquaintance for the first time when he was boiling over with indignation at the conduct of Puddleton, on which he himself has been sufficiently the exponent.

'Well, papa,' said Florence gaily, as she advanced, and playfully tapped her father's newspaper with her riding-whip, 'why don't you have a flag flying from our flagstaff? Puddleton's *en fête*, and our house looks quite conspicuous by the absence of bunting.'

A savage grunt from behind the newspaper was all the reply.

'Let your papa alone, Florry darling,' said Mrs. Buddlecombe. 'He's busy reading the paper. Come and tell me what you've been doing.'

Thus enjoined, the light-hearted Florry rattled away, regardless, or rather, in the exuberance of her spirits, unconscious, of the nods and winks and frowns with which her mother sought to warn her off the dangerous ground.

'O, such fun, mamma! I met my dear old godpapa, Mr. Bolitho, riding on his cob, and he says the regiment will arrive at the railway-station very soon, and he was going up there to see; and he has promised to ride down to tell us when they're coming, so that we may go to the lodge and see them pass. And what *do* you think the dear funny old thing said? He joked me so, and said I should be having half a dozen young officers at my feet, and that I mustn't get conceited and turn up my nose at old fellows like him. And the dear old thing laughed so, and said I wasn't to go falling in love with more than one at a time, and—'

Here Mr. Buddlecombe started to his feet and dashed his newspaper down.

'Silence, prattling idiot!' he roared. 'Babbling booby, be still!'

In one bound Florence was by her mother's side, where she stood cowering while Mr. Buddlecombe continued to pour out the vials of his wrath.

'Look here, Florence! If I ever hear another word of this vile trash I'll pack you off to your aunt Virginia in the North. Old Bolitho is a confounded old fool, and I consider him a very improper person to be your godfather. He isn't fit to be at large, blasting youthful minds like a deadly upas-tree, and should be chained

up. He's "such a dear funny old thing," is he? And "you'll have half a dozen young officers at your feet," will you? Much more likely they'll have my feet at *them*. And you "mustn't go falling in love with—" I'll tell you what it is: I'll take precious good care you don't. As long as this neighbourhood is contaminated by these scamps in regimentals, you'll have uncommon few opportunities of seeing them at your feet, and all the rest of the trash of that miserable old dotard Bolitho. You'll be confined to these grounds, except when you go out with me; and if when you're out with me you even so much as glance at one of these puppies, I'll pack you off to your aunt Virginia in the North by the very next train. So mark my words, my vivacious young lady.'

And here Mr. Buddlecombe turned on his heel and paced up and down the room, muttering to himself,

'Preposterous! That a girl to whom I give thirty thousand pounds on her wedding-day, and on whose education no expense has been spared, should be guilty of such abominable sentiments!'

Suddenly Mr. Buddlecombe stopped his furious promenade up and down the room; and, turning sharp round, addressed Florence in ironical tones:

'I think you suggested that I should hoist a flag. A capital idea! Yes, I *shall* hoist a flag to celebrate the entry of the military into Puddleton.'

So saying, Mr. Buddlecombe bustled out of the room in a grimly mysterious manner.

CHAPTER II.

'Don't cry, my dear Florry,' said Mrs. Buddlecombe; for Florence's great blue eyes, which a few moments before had been dancing with fun and joy, were now dim with tears. 'You know your father's extraordinary antipathy to the military, Florry, and really you should have been more careful. There, never mind!'

'O yes, I know; it was very stupid of me,' said Florry, smiling through her tears. 'But I couldn't help it, mamma. My heart is so full this morning that I am even more impulsive than usual.'

'So full, Florry! Full of what? And what is there in this morning to fill it so very full of anything?' asked her mother.

Florence played nervously with her riding-whip, blushed crimson, bit her lips, became pale, and then flushed again.

'Come, Florry, tell me,' said her mother, in gentle affectionate tones, at the same time drawing her arm fondly round her daughter's slim waist.

'Well, mamma,' said Florence, apparently engaged in an absorbing examination of the gold mounting on her riding-whip, 'do you remember Mr. Warriner whom we met at Folkestone, when you and I were there alone together two summers ago?'

'Yes, perfectly.'

'Well, this is his regiment, just returned from the Crimea, that's expected at Puddleton to-day.'

'Is it really? I am sure, child, I had quite forgotten what regiment he belonged to.'

'I hadn't, mamma. I—I think you liked Mr. Warriner, didn't you?'

'Yes, particularly so, Florry. Handsome but not conceited, manly and yet gentle, thoroughly self-possessed and yet not forward,

I thought him altogether one of the most charming young men I had ever met.'

This panegyric brought the blood mantling proudly to Florence's cheek, and encouraged her to speak her mind out a little more plainly.

'You would not be astonished then to hear, mamma, that I— I—'

Here maidenly bashfulness stopped her, and Mrs. Buddlecombe was left to pick up the delicate thread of their discourse.

'Not in the least astonished, Florry dear. I should have been astonished a few minutes ago; but I now know your secret without your having told it to me. Ah, Florry, it does not necessarily require a tongue to tell a tale of love. There are a thousand other modes and indications just as eloquent as, and more so very often than, words. Your father, for instance, first told *his* love by means of—mutton-chops!'

'Mutton-chops, mamma!' screamed Florry. 'O, how horrible!'

'Yes, mutton-chops, Florry. And now, having told you so much, I feel I had better tell you all. My mother was passionately fond of dogs, especially little ones, of which sort she always had three or four about her; and she frequently declared that they were better judges of human nature than humanity itself. One day, in the hearing of Joshua, who was paying us a visit, she stated her determination never to allow me to marry a man towards whom her dogs exhibited any marked antipathy, "for," said she, "I am convinced they, in common with all their species, possess the keenest intuition of good and evil in human nature." I did not notice it, but my mother did, and told me, some time afterwards, that upon this remark of hers a look

of gloomy despair clouded Joshua's brow, for he was not popular with my mother's pets; and after a visit to us he always took his departure considerably damaged about the shoe-laces and the bottoms of his trousers, owing to their persistent hostility. On his next visit, however, there was an extraordinary change in the behaviour of these little animals. They jumped and frisked about Joshua, and they fawned upon him. They even tried to get into his pocket, and when he went away it was all we could do to prevent them from following him. "There," said my mother, "*that's* the man I should like to see you married to, Georgina. That's a man after my own heart." "O, nonsense, mamma," I said; "Mr. Buddlecombe has not an idea of me, I'm sure." "I'm sorry for it, my dear," said my mother; "for I am convinced he has an honest nature and a kind heart, or my dogs would never take to him as they do." The next visit Joshua paid us, the same sort of thing went on. The little dogs would not leave him for a moment, and they hung about him with a fondness which my mother said was quite touching, and which raised him higher than ever in her estimation. He was, she said, without exception, the best man she had ever come across; for never had she met a man to whom her little dogs had taken such a violent fancy. Unfortunately, my brother, your uncle Tom, Florry, came in to show us a mastiff he had just bought from a man in the streets. "I don't suppose he's seen an ounce of meat for the last fortnight," said your uncle Tom, in his pleasant off-hand manner; "he's half-starved now; but when I feed him up a bit he'll be an out-and-out stunner, and as big as a don-

key." "He seems quite fascinated with Mr. Buddlecombe; what an extraordinary, what a beautiful, I may say sublime, influence you seem to exercise over dogs!" exclaimed my mother, in tones of the deepest admiration. These words were hardly out of her mouth when a scene ensued which I shall never forget, Florry. The mastiff just took one sniff at Joshua, and the next moment Joshua was on his back on the hearth-rug, with the huge brute over him, devouring his very vitals, as we all thought to our horror. We soon thankfully discovered, however, that your father had sustained no personal injury. The skirts of his greatcoat were torn right off, and three mutton-chops were transferred with wondrous rapidity from the pocket of that garment to the interior of the voracious monster. The whole thing then flashed through my brain, and I may add my heart as well, that Joshua was trying to win my young untried affections, and then my hand, by first gaining the good-will of my mother. But, Florry dear, never let your father know that I told you this little episode in his courtship. He has never been able to bear the sight of a mutton-chop since. But with *me* it is different. Mutton-chops are always tenderly associated in *my* mind with the first dawn of love—"

Here Mrs. Buddlecombe paused for a moment, and then added dreamily,

"Especially the flaps, for it was those portions which we first saw protruding from Joshua's pocket."

"O mamma, how horrible!" exclaimed Florence; "how atrociously unromantic! I'm glad the first dawn of *my* love has no such vile associations. No," added the young girl rapturously, "it is linked in fond memory with the warring of

the elements as we stood together one stormy afternoon on the Lees at Folkestone, and gazed down on the white-crested waves of the English Channel—"

"With the *chops* of the Channel, in short," said Mrs. Buddlecombe, with a sly smile. "You see, Florry, there's a strong similarity in our cases, after all."

"O mamma," screamed Florry, stuffing her fingers into her ears, and laughing, "I won't listen; it's sacrilege."

"Well, but seriously, Florry darling, you're in love, eh?"

"O, irretrievably!" replied Florence, opening her eyes wide, and looking very solemn and determined.

"I am sorry for it. I had no idea it had been anything more than just a mild little passing boy-and-girlish flirtation. I am *very* sorry for it, Florry."

"Why, mamma, why?" asked Florry, peering eagerly into her mother's eyes, while a startled look of pain and fear flitted into the fair young face.

"Because, my child," replied Mrs. Buddlecombe, with a steadfast but tender gaze, "I fear no good can come of it. Your father will never countenance anything of the sort. I tremble to think of the effect the disclosure would have upon him. It would be like putting a lighted match into a barrel of gunpowder. Such is his blind unreasoning antipathy to the army that I believe he would sooner see you married to a field-labourer than to a field-marshal."

"It makes me tremble too when I think of it; but I have an idea, mamma, that it will all come right in the end," said Florence, with that truly youthful belief in 'the end.' "And, O, after all the suspense of the last eighteen months, while he has been away in that dreadful land, that awful

valley of the shadow of death, I feel this morning too happy in the consciousness of his safe return to think of anything more than that. What a happy day this is compared with that dark day of horror when I read in the newspapers, "Severely wounded, Lieutenant Algernon Fitzmaurice Warriner, Queen's Own Fusiliers"! How I passed the time and kept up appearances before you all until the next mail brought better news, I know not!

'Hush, Florry, here's your father!' said Mrs. Buddlecombe, who was not quite so intent in the listening as Florence was in the telling.

'I've hoisted my flag to celebrate the entry of the military into Puddleton,' said Mr. Buddlecombe, as he came fussing into the room; 'and I've derived a certain amount of gloomy satisfaction from hoisting it half-mast high. If I had only had a black flag with a Death's head and cross-bones, I'd have hoisted *that*. But I hadn't, and so I used the Union Jack upside down instead. And if I only had sufficient experience in explosives, I'd further console myself by firing off minute-guns; or if my musical education had not been neglected, I'd play a solo on the muffled drum. That could hardly be construed into a manifestation of rejoicing by even the most bigoted admirer of the military. Moreover, if—'

Here a heavy footstep in the verandah outside, tramping in time to a hearty gruff-toned rendering of the 'British Grenadiers,' cut short Mr. Buddlecombe in the full flow of his rhetoric.

'Bother Bolitho!' he ejaculated. 'Everybody that comes to the house this morning seems to think it necessary to herald his or her approach with a song. First of all, Florence comes in caterwaul-

ing, and then this old porpoise Bolitho comes pounding along my verandah, and making a noise like a rhinoceros in a fit, which I've no doubt he calls singing.'

At this point, after humming the martial air up to the last moment before coming into view, Mr. Bolitho entered the room with a beaming smile on his fine red old face, his low-crowned broad-brimmed beaver in one hand and an enormous nosegay in the other. Mr. Bolitho, or 'old Joe Bolitho,' as he was generally called in Puddleton and the neighbourhood, was a Puddletonian born and bred. He and Mr. Buddlecombe had been boys together, a fact he was always jovially alluding to. He was a fine hearty old fellow of about eighteen stone in weight and sixty years of age. He was not exactly a congenial companion for a person whose nervous system was completely deranged; but for any one in fair condition of mind and body, who did not mind a noise and an occasional prod in the ribs, there could not have been a jollier associate than old Joe Bolitho. By the young of both sexes he was idolised.

'Ah, how are you, my dear Mrs. Buddlecombe?' said Mr. Bolitho, as he threw his hat and the nosegay on to a table, and then seized the lady by both her hands. 'Well, Florry, little girl, seen you before this morning. How are you, Buddle?' this last inquiry being accompanied by a poke in the worshipful ribs.

'Quite well, thank you, "mine old familiar friend,"' replied Mr. Buddlecombe, resenting the liberty by drawing himself up into a dignified attitude, which was completely lost on Joe Bolitho.

'That's right. With the tower-row-de-dow-dow of the—Excuse me, Mrs. Buddlecombe, excuse me, my dear lady, I am in

such a state of martial enthusiasm that I can't help being a little demonstrative.'

'I admire it in you, Mr. Bolitho. I only wish you could instil a little of your fine patriotic feeling into a certain other individual,' said Mrs. Buddlecombe, while Mr. Buddlecombe sought refuge in his newspaper, which was his usual sanctuary.

'And what's that enormous bouquet for, Mr. Bolitho?' asked Florence.

'That, Florry! That's for you to throw at the head of the column as it marches past the lodge-gates,' said Mr. Bolitho, seizing the bouquet, and waving it enthusiastically over his head: 'Beauty crowning Valour!'

'Nothing of the sort,' said Mr. Buddlecombe, lowering his newspaper and glaring fiercely over it. 'Florence, if you dare to crown valour I'll send you to bed and stop your pocket-money!'

'Then I shall, Mr. Bolitho!' said Mrs. Buddlecombe, with an extremely majestic bearing, accompanied by an insubordinate glance at her spouse.

'You! Do you consider, Mrs. Buddlecombe, that you are fitted

at your time of life to enact the part of Beauty?'

And here Mr. Buddlecombe, having propounded this question, rose from his chair and awaited the answer with his hands under his coat-tails.

'Certainly,' replied Mrs. Buddlecombe, stung to the quick by this unmanly allusion to a lady's age. 'Certainly; for *you*, Mr. Buddlecombe, are playing the companion *rôle* to such perfection—Beauty and the Beast!'

This last with significant action.

'Ha, ha, ha!' roared old Bolitho. 'Bravo, Mrs. Buddlecombe! I say, Buddle old fellow, that's one to Mrs. B! Ha, ha, ha!'

'It may be one to Mrs. B., Bolitho,' snapped Mr. B.; 'but it's nothing to you. At any rate I wish you wouldn't make such a noise about it.'

'Ha, ha, ha!' again roared the incorrigible old Joe.

'Bolitho should be muffled when he's in a facetious mood, and then one might cajole oneself into the belief that he was only distant thunder,' snarled Mr. Buddlecombe, as he stumped off to his armchair and his newspaper in high dudgeon.

(To be continued).

OUR LONDON NOTE-BOOK.

MR. BRIGHT in a recent speech at Rochdale quoted several remarkable prophetic utterances respecting the discovery of America, and the future greatness of the United States. Some of these, he told his hearers, were made more than 1400 years before the famous voyage of Columbus. It is odd that one of the most singular and striking of these prophecies should have escaped the notice both of Mr. Bright and of Mr. Sumner, the compiler of the work from which Mr. Bright quoted. In the year 1598 our English poet, Samuel Daniel, wrote these lines:

'And who knows whither we may vent
The treasure of our tongue? To what
strange shores
This gain of our best glory may be sent
Tenrich unknowing nations with our
stores?
What worlds in the yet unform'd Occi-
dent
May 'come refined with th' accents that
are ours?'

Now those lines were written at a time when there was not a single Englishman settled in America. Every effort to establish an English colony there had been a disastrous failure. Sir Walter Raleigh had fitted out no less than seven expeditions, and spent 40,000*l.*, an enormous sum in those days, in endeavouring to colonise Virginia; but the result was a miserable fiasco. Those of the early settlers who did not leave their bones whitening among the forests and savannahs came back in wretched plight to tell a pitiful tale of famine and pestilence and massacre. All hope of ever founding an American settlement died out; the idea was recognised as

too chimerical to be ever realised. The most far-sighted men shrugged their shoulders and pronounced the thing impossible; and England with a sigh relinquished all hope of colonising America.

Seven years later, on the 19th of December 1606, three small vessels—the largest only 100 tons' burden—set sail from Blackwall. Among the adventurers who manned them was the famous Captain John Smith. The poet was down upon the quay at Blackwall, and saw that little band of pioneers set out upon their quest. Little did he think, doubtless, that in them he saw the germ from which was to spring the fulfilment of his own prophecy. But it was so; for the colony established by Captain John Smith in Virginia gave England her first firm foothold in the New World. It is interesting to think of that unconscious prophet watching with his own eyes the departure of the expedition that was to found an English-speaking community 'in the yet unform'd Occident,' which should far eclipse in splendour and wealth and power the wildest dreams of his own imagination. I think, therefore, that this prophecy of Samuel Daniel deserves a place among the most memorable of those 'prophetic voices' to which Mr. Bright made such effective allusion.

A correspondent writes, in reference to a note of mine on Colonel Thornton, in the December number of *London Society*: 'As a

connection of Colonel Thornton's wife, I shall be glad if you will mention in any future notes in *London Society* on Colonel Thornton's amours that the true Mrs. Thornton, his wife, was Elizabeth Cawston of Munden Hall, Maldon, Essex; and that the marriage took place subsequently to the connection formed with Alicia Meynell. Are you quite sure that this was her name, and not Alicia Massingham? I think in your notes in this month's *London Society*, the fact of the Colonel's marriage is somewhat *prejudicially omitted*. It gives one the impression that there was not at any time a Mrs. Thornton properly so called. I have some recollection of once seeing a *Life of Colonel Thornton*, with an engraving, as frontispiece, of the colonel standing with his gun on his shoulder, and one or two pointers by his side. Will you kindly tell me if you have come across the book? Colonel Thornton owned at one time Al-lerton Park, which he purchased of the Duke of York for 110,000*l.*, and afterwards sold to Lord Thornton.

I am sorry that my omission to mention the colonel's marriage should have been deemed prejudicial to his memory; for I need hardly say I had no intention of in any way injuring his reputation. I was aware that his lawful wife was Elizabeth Cawston; for I have read the case of *Curling v. Thornton*, in which his widow sought to upset the will by which Pricilla Davies and her illegitimate daughter were made the colonel's sole legatees. I have not seen the *Life of Colonel Thornton*, to which my correspondent alludes; but the engraving which she describes is, if I remember rightly, to be found in the *Sporting Magazine* for 1818,

accompanying a memoir of the colonel.

The number of Christmas-cards sent by post this year exceeded every previous record. I am told that not far short of a million were delivered in London alone on Christmas-day. I observe that some indignant Londoners in letters to the newspapers denounce this deluge of cards as 'a new great social evil,' and complain bitterly of its delaying the delivery of 'legitimate correspondence.' I do not wholly agree with these grumblers, because I think the practice serves to some extent to keep up the memory of friendships and acquaintanceships which one is too busy or too lazy to keep up by 'legitimate correspondence.' And it is, moreover, a pretty and touching sentiment that is embodied in this custom of sending Christmas-cards. But though I am not in agreement with those who object to the practice of sending these seasonable *souvenirs* by post because it produces a block in postal traffic, I do object to it on other grounds. It tends to make letter-writing an art less practised than ever; and though I have drifted with other folks into the state of mind which regards correspondence as a bore, yet I often regret that it should be so. I can remember the time when I enjoyed sitting down and spinning a long chatty yarn to an absent friend, and enjoyed perhaps still more receiving one. Before this fashion of Christmas-cards came in, it was generally regarded as a duty to despatch at least one long letter annually to each of one's absent friends. But now even that small epistolary sacrifice on the altar of friendship is deemed unnecessary. And indeed few people nowadays know how to write a letter. How

many can one count among one's acquaintances who are able to put down their thoughts on paper and gossip by post, as was the pleasant fashion years ago, *Consule Planco*? Yet I have learnt more of the real nature of some of my friends from their letters than from their talk. One can often say things in a letter which one would not care to utter orally, because a reticent reserve would check the flow of words. And then in a letter you can have your say out, there is no one to interrupt you. It is your innings, and you make the most of it.

Ah, well, the art of letter-writing, as I say, is dead now. 'Epistolary matter,' says Elia, in that charming letter of his on *Distant Correspondents*, 'usually compriseth three topics—news, sentiment, and puns.' Who would ever dream nowadays of wasting his sentiments or his puns upon a single correspondent? Those who could write good letters are either lazy or selfish. It is either too much trouble to them to put pen to paper, or else they make money by their pens, and grudge writing down gratuitously any thought which may possibly be worth coin of the realm. It is a selfish age, I am afraid, and that is the real secret of these novel devices for giving the lie to the old proverb, 'Out of sight, out of mind.' A lazy and a selfish world, my masters; and so we buy our tokens of affection and our *souvenirs* of friendship ready-made. *Vivent De la Rue* and *Eyre & Spottiswoode*, with all their tasteful artistic creations, and down with the nuisance of letters! That is the watchword of society now.

Another art that I may also number among those that are dead or moribund is the art of conversation. How many men are there

now, I wonder, who would indorse old Tom Fuller's sentiment that 'the study of books is a languishing and feeble notion that heats not; whereas conversation teaches and exercises at once'? And yet I know of nothing more agreeable in the whole round of social pleasures than lively and sensible conversation; though, on the other hand, there is nothing much more wearisome than the frivolous and silly chatter which passes muster as conversation with the present generation. A few feeble commonplace about the last new play or novel, a little secondhand scandal from the society journals, a sprinkling of borrowed sarcasms and plagiarised jokes, with a strong dash of vulgar slang, this is what society accepts as conversation nowadays. If you ask me why the art of conversation is becoming, if it has not already become, extinct, I do not know that I could find any very satisfactory reason to give you. I do not know that we of to-day are more shallow than the men and women of other days, that we are less well-informed, less capable of forming opinions of our own, or less fluent of tongue. Perhaps we are too much addicted to what is called, in the current slang, 'shop.' Whether it be in literature, in art, in politics, in sport, you rarely find any one who is capable of talking intelligently on any subject outside his own particular 'shop.' For the rest, men and women go to their favourite journals, and are content to take their opinions and things in general secondhand and ready-made. How often do you find a man or woman who has taken the trouble to form an original and independent opinion upon any matter which has been discussed in the columns of the Press? No sensible being cares to hear a *réchauffé* of the views expressed

in the journals of the day, and so it is that conversation has dwindled into the feeblest and smallest of small-talk. It is actually a relief to turn from such insipid gabble to those, in my thinking, hideously unsociable pastimes, chess and whist. The man who invented those pastimes must, I think, have been a cynic and a misanthrope. But we of the present day have no need to upbraid him. For with the art of conversation extinct, even chess and whist may be accepted as antidotes to *ennui*.

There are, I am told, some ladies and gentlemen who, not content with cutting a figure in fashionable society, aspire to a literary reputation as well, and to that end employ some clever hack to vamp up a novel or a book of travels, to which they append their names as the authors. It is but seldom that these jackdaws are stripped of their borrowed peacock's plumes, and held up in their own poor dragged feathers to the ridicule which they deserve. Yet I note that when a novel or a book of travels is announced as forthcoming from the pen of some considerable personage in the *beau monde*, there is a more general disposition than ever before to remark, with an air of confident ill-nature, 'I wonder who Lady So-and-so has got to write that new novel of hers?' or 'I suppose young Thingumbob is doing that new book of travel for Mrs. What-d'ye-call-her.' The latest question of this sort I have heard asked is, 'Who writes the Shah's diaries for him?' For another of those curious records of the Persian monarch's impressions has just been given to the world, and it seems too much to expect of an Oriental potentate that he should be personally guilty of such unaccountable literary activity. I

cannot say that there is much trace of originality or humour in the most recent of Nasrerdin-Shah's diaries. Now and then his ideas are funny from their extreme childishness; but that is the only element of fun in the dreary volume. I will give two specimens of the quality of the book.

It will be remembered that the Shah was greatly struck with the numbers of perambulators in the London parks, and he seems to have been equally struck with the prevalence of umbrellas in Paris. He remarks sententially: 'Every person, man or woman, on leaving the house, takes an umbrella in his hand; and the umbrella has three uses: it may be used as a walking-stick, or to shelter a person from the sun or from the rain, and occasionally as a weapon to strike another's head.' I presume that every loyal Persian feels it incumbent upon him to read the diary of his Shah; consequently, when any as yet untravelled Persian comes to visit Europe he will eye, with mingled curiosity and alarm, every carrier of an umbrella—doubtful with which of the three objects stated by the Shah the article in question is being carried, and prepared to defend himself against any sudden attack upon his cranium. For the royal diarist leaves his reader in blissful uncertainty as to whether the use of the umbrella as an offensive weapon be generally wanton and unprovoked or not.

The Shah is evidently proud of his own sagacity, and tells the following little story in illustration of that feature of his character. When he was inspecting the Artillery School at Fontainebleau, the cadets of that establishment were paraded before him. 'One of the pupils,' proceeds the Shah, 'didn't

seem to me to be a European, but a Japanese. I said, "Japanese, come here!" and the officers and pupils were greatly astonished at my knowing where the youth came from. But there was a reason for my knowing him to be a Japanese, for I had been told that the number of pupils was two or three hundred, and that only one Japanese was there.' A marvellously clever guess that!

There have been many far more entertaining and interesting records of an Asiatic's impressions of European society than these diaries of the Shah. In the year 1682, for example, an ambassador from Bantam visited England, and among the observations which he jotted down for the edification of his master were the following curious and amusing ones: 'At my first going to Court one of the great men almost put me out of countenance by asking ten thousand pardons of me for only treading by accident upon my toe. They call this kind of lie a compliment; for when they are civil to a great man they tell him untruths, for which thou wouldst order any of thy officers of state to receive a hundred blows upon his foot. I do not know how I shall negotiate anything with these people, since there is so little credit to be given to them. When I go to see the king's scribe I am generally told that he is not at home, though perhaps I saw him go into his house a moment before. Thou wouldst fancy that the whole nation are physicians, for the first question they always ask me is how I do; I have this question put to me above a hundred times a day. Nay, they are not only thus inquisitive after my health, but wish it in a more solemn manner, with a full glass in their hands, every time I sit with them at table, though at the same time

they would persuade me to drink their liquors in such quantities as I have found by experience would make me sick. They often pretend to pray for thy health also in the same manner; but I have more reason to expect it from the goodness of thy constitution than the sincerity of their wishes.' I shall not pretend to say that the foregoing has not been skilfully manipulated in translation, but there is trustworthy evidence for the assertion that it faithfully reproduces the sentiments, if not the exact language, of the original. And perhaps that is as much as can be said of the English translation of the Shah's diary.

One of the Siamese ambassadors who visited England a few years ago published a narrative of his travels, which was far superior in every respect to the Shah's diary. I have not the book by me, otherwise I should certainly cull some extracts as illustrations of 'ourselves as others see us.' I remember, however, his description of the Queen, and it was as follows: 'One cannot but be struck with the aspect of the august Queen of England, or fail to observe that she must be of pure descent from a race of goodly and warlike kings and rulers of the earth, in that her eyes, complexion, and, above all, her bearing are those of a beautiful and majestic White Elephant!'

No doubt this was intended as the very highest compliment; but when the worthy ambassador compares the 'complexion' of our gracious Sovereign to that of a 'white elephant,' the compliment begins to assume a dubious aspect. Opinions, indeed, vary as to the exact colour of that sacred animal. Mr. Frank Vincent, in his *Land of the White Elephant*, speaks of it as 'a dark-cream Albino,' while

Sir John Bowring says 'it is of a coffee colour, dull brownish-yellow, or yellowish-brown;' and Mrs. Leonowens, in her amusing book, *The English Governess at the Siamese Court*, declares that it is a pale-salmon pink. If Mrs. Leonowens be right, the compliment is more apparent to our Western comprehension than it would be if either Mr. Vincent's or Sir John Bowring's description were correct.

I have noted several letters in London contemporaries of late on the subject of eccentricities in the naming of children; and I dare say the following, which have come under my own notice, will be found as amusing as any. At the little village of Buckland Newton, in Dorsetshire, there prevailed a custom some forty years ago—and for aught I know to the contrary it may prevail still—of naming all the children of a family with the same initial letter. For example, the blacksmith had all his children christened by names beginning with H. Biblical names were the favourites; and one labourer with a large family, who had chosen M as the family initial, was puzzled to meet the increasing demand upon that letter, and after ransacking the Old Testament discovered and adopted for two of his girls the names of Mahalath and Mehetabel. I knew a case at Whitechurch Canon-corum, in Dorsetshire, in which a boy was christened Mahalshalal-hashbaz, and went familiarly by the abbreviated name of 'Shalal.' In the Isle of Man I remember a servant-girl who bore the name of Azenath, the wife of the patriarch Joseph. But the most amusing eccentricity I have ever heard of was the following: The first four boys of a family were named after the four Evangelists, and on the unexpected arrival of a fifth he

was baptised the 'Acts of the Apostles.' That I know to be a fact. And there are in Canterbury now, or were six or seven years ago, two instances of young men with Christian names of 'Acts,' without the addition, however, 'of the Apostles;' and each had been so called because the names of the four Evangelists had been previously exhausted upon his brothers.

I was in Sunderland not long ago, and paid a visit to the Subscription Library there. The librarian called my attention to the portrait of the first president of the institution, a fine, portly, jovial-looking personage, in the costume of the last century, who was an eminent physician in Sunderland a hundred years ago. The name of this worthy was Dr. Joseph Brown; and this good story is told of him, which is worth retailing. The old doctor lived and died a bachelor, for the romantic reason that the lady on whom he had set his affections could not see her way to accepting his hand, and he was too constant in his love to court another. The doctor's love-story was well-known in the place; and one evening, when he was sitting over his pipe and glass of punch in the club-room of a famous old tavern there, an impudent fellow in his cups thought to annoy the doctor and raise a laugh against him by toasting his coy mistress. The doctor, however, was too good-humoured to be easily put out, and he effectually turned the laugh upon his chaffer by remarking with a chuckle, 'Yes, you may toast her; you won't anger me nor hurt her. I have been toasting her for years; but I've never made her *Brown* yet.' As good a pun of its kind, I think, as I ever heard.

JUNIOUS JUNIOR.

LOVE'S ONE REFRAIN.

EYES shadowed like the water-brooks,
That flow in some dark dim retreat,
And mirror back each shade that looks
Into the deep brown depths they meet—
Such eyes have you, my love, my sweet !

Like soft and trailing things that throw
Their sweeping folds across the stream,
And shadow all its placid flow
(As thoughts that fill a dreamer's dream)—
So those fringed lashes droop and seem.

I might have made a hundred rhymes
Upon the beauty of your face ;
I might have sung the changeful chimes
On every shy and changeful grace
That is so sweet in such a place.

But brow and cheek and dimpled chin,
And that sweet serious mouth of thine
Where smiles are rarely out or in,
But only hover round the line
Of all that doth to mirth incline,

Are all as nothing when I gaze
Into the light of perfect bliss,
Which melts and moves in starry rays,
Of those diviner lights I wis
That sleep must be so loth to miss.

Were I but sleep, I had no heart
To close those curtained fringes down,
And see the lily-lids apart
From those dark orbs they brightly crown—
My peerless lady's eyes of brown.

But since I am not sleep, my dear,
I will not grudge his transient share
Of folding thee in fearless fear
Of all that dreams may sweet declare,
For in a dream I may be near.

Ay, nearer than in waking hours,
Where pain and pleasure twin-like reign ;
And you upon your path of flowers
Look calmly on each heart you gain,
And weary of Love's one refrain.

RITA.



LOVE'S ONE REFRAIN

See the Verses.

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THE VIOLIN-PLAYER.

BY BERTHA THOMAS, AUTHOR OF 'PROUD MAISIE.'

CHAPTER IV.

TRANSFORMATION.

NEVER did the red-brick houses and church-spires of Bleiburg look so pleasant in the eyes of a traveller, as to Linda and Laurence, when that city came in sight at last. Weary, dusty, and foot-sore though they were, they forgot all discomfort when within reach of the goal.

'We shall be all right now,' said Linda merrily. 'I shall present myself at the Academy, get out my letters of introduction, explain everything, and we shall only remember our misfortunes to laugh at them. In a day or two all our difficulties will be over.'

But her child-companion had turned grave and downcast. Now that sober realities were about to take the place of sweet dreams, Laurence felt vividly how forlorn was her position; and it half appalled her. How would Professor Nielsen receive Allori's *protégée*? On that her whole future depended. She had not a friend in Bleiburg, not a soul to go to for help or direction.

'Whatever happens,' said Linda consolingly, 'I sha'n't desert you. I've grown quite fond of you these last two days. We've shared misadventures together; and if when we get to Bleiburg I come in for better luck than most, as I expect, you shall share it too. I'll take care of that.'

Though Bleiburg had looked quite near, it was five o'clock ere they reached the outskirts. Linda

debated. 'It's too late to come bearing down upon strangers to-night,' she decided. 'Besides, I am not fit to be seen at this moment, and should make an unfavourable impression. I'm ravenously hungry too, after our dry-bread breakfast. We will go to some quiet little inn, where we shall get a cheap lodging and supper, rest, make ourselves presentable, and in the morning start fresh to settle our affairs and look up our Professors.'

But Laurence felt her own difficulties too pressing. She had arrived in Bleiburg with a single possible mainstay to seek: Professor Nielsen. Supposing he were ill or dead or away; what would become of her? The thought put her in a fever of fear and impatience. Sleep and rest were out of the question till something was settled. Linda having singled out a homely little inn in one of the back streets, went in, engaged a room, ordered supper, and proceeded at once to the rearrangement of her toilette. Laurence having declared her intention—which was to go with her letter to Nielsen at once—took up her violin-case, and without waiting for Linda's assent or dissent, marched off bravely by herself into the streets.

The strange town, strange language, strange people, made Bleiburg like a new world to the child; the world where her new life was to begin. With the few words of German she had picked up on the journey she easily found

out her way to the address on the letter. An old-fashioned gabled wooden house, the last in a street leading away from the town. An old woman with her head wrapped in a woollen shawl, and looking about as affable as a surly shepherd's dog mounting guard over his master's clothes, was loitering in the porch, scowled at Laurence as she approached, and to her timid inquiry whether Professor Nielsen were at home, returned a reply of which Laurence understood merely that it was gruff. The child then produced Allori's letter, upon which the woman signed to her to come into the porch, and went shuffling up the wooden staircase in her felt slippers.

It was pitch dark below—the ground-floor seemed to consist of a stable. Here Laurence waited for what appeared an interminable time, in all the worst agonies of suspense. At length the woman came shuffling down again, with a letter which she handed to the child, at the same time holding open the house-door, and so plainly signifying to her to be off, that Laurence could but comply, disappointed that she might not see the Professor at once. It was too late in the day perhaps, but she doubted not he had written to fix an hour to-morrow.

Ten minutes later, Linda, who was proving to herself how divinely sweet are supper and repose—though in a garret—after an exhausting journey, was astounded, when in the midst of her bread-and-cheese, to see the door flung open suddenly and Laurence walk in, her cheeks flushed, her eyes sparkling, her hands tightly clasped.

'Bless me, you little tragedy queen! Why, what on earth is the matter now?' she asked, starting back.

Laurence tried to speak, but her excitement choked her utterance.

'Haven't you seen him?' inquired Linda carelessly, reverting to the rations before her. 'Come, sit down and have supper and tell me all about it.'

'I don't want any supper,' said Laurence vehemently. 'Don't talk to me, Linda,' she put up her hand to her forehead, saying over to herself impulsively, 'It can't be true.'

The child's agitation seemed so frantic that Linda thought it prudent to hold her peace till the heat of it had abated, as she took for granted that soon it would. So she finished her meal leisurely and in silence; then observed that she was going to bed. Laurence meanwhile kept walking up and down the bare squalid-looking room, mute, like a wild thing in a trap. She was too excited to cry, wrought up to the last pitch of nervous tension. Linda had never seen a girl in such a state in her life.

She took no notice for a while, but at last, fearing the child would hurt herself, she began good-humouredly,

'You had really better tell me what has happened. Did you see him?'

'He won't see me,' said Laurence violently. 'He won't teach me or have anything to do with me, and all because—only because—I'm a girl.'

'What?' and Linda burst into a hearty laugh, 'because you're a girl? Well, you can't help that.'

That was not the question, however. She took the open letter Laurence held out to her. It was in Italian, and ran as follows:

'Professor Nielsen begs to say that he never, under any consideration, has taken or will take lady pupils, and this is a rule to which he can make no exception. Should Signor Allori's pupil be

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willing to give up the violin, and commence some other branch of study at the Academy of Bleiburg, Professor Nielsen will do what he can to assist her in obtaining admission from the authorities.'

Now Laurence had heard before that Nielsen was a strange man, hasty and difficult to please; but never had it occurred to her as possible that she could be met by such a repulse as this.

It staggered and wounded her like a blow. The old man would not believe, would not even give her a hearing; and here she had come all the way from Italy, hoping everything from him, and arrived, helpless, eager, only to be told that her errand was useless, and the best advice Bleiburg could offer her was to go back, to contradict her whole life, throw over the past, in submission to an old man's caprice.

'You see what he says,' the child exclaimed appealingly to Linda, 'that I mustn't expect any help from him here—unless—unless I give up the violin.'

Linda listened, perfectly unmoved.

'Well, why not?' she observed coolly, after a pause. 'You're only twelve. You might begin the pianoforte. Then I daresay you've some voice, enough for a chorus-singer. After all, the violin is rather an awkward, unusual instrument for a lady to play.'

Laurence scarcely allowed her to finish.

'Give up the violin?' she repeated vehemently, still walking to and fro. 'The only thing I have to love, the only thing that still brings my father back to me! O *père, père*,' and she broke into a passion of wild grief and tears, 'why can't you come back to your little girl? She wants

you, and I know, I *know* you want her, even now!'

Linda was confounded. She was sitting half-dressed on the bed in the unlit room, staring at Laurence and without a word to say. This paroxysm was quite unlike her own furies. Her rage sought instinctively for a victim to wreak itself on. A flower-pot broken, a door slammed afforded a touch of relief. Laurence's resentment found no outlet of the sort, there was no vindictiveness in it; but her whole frame was convulsed with agitation.

'Good gracious, you quite frighten me, you poor child! I am sorry, though, that you take it so much to heart. You'd better do like me, get to bed and go to sleep, or you'll be ill to-morrow.'

'O, it is a shame!' cried Laurence unheeding, suddenly stopping short in her walk. 'How can he send me away without even a trial? Does he think I can't work as hard as a boy, or even harder, or that I shall never play as well? O, if only I could be one, just for half an hour, to show him! Val used to say the boys he knew were idle compared to me.'

Linda gazed at her in dumb amazement. The child had come to a standstill by the window before the looking-glass. A lurid streak of light from a gas-lamp outside shone into the room, and Linda saw the little face reflected, white with excitement, in a frame of dark hair, all loose and hanging.

'The child has the spirit of a boy, that's certain,' she thought admiringly for a moment. The next she gave a loud scream of horror and dismay. 'Laurence! Holy Virgin! what is she doing? O you mad little creature!'

For Laurence had snatched up Linda's scissors—a large pair that

chanced to lie there on the table—and with her left hand grasped the sweeping plaits. The next minute she had severed them, and they lay on the floor at her feet.

'Mercy!' shrieked Linda again, shuddering, for it was just as though she had seen her snip off a finger or an ear.

'There,' said Laurence, relieved, turning quickly; running her hand through her short locks and pushing them back from her forehead. 'Shouldn't I do for a boy, now?'

'Well, you might perhaps,' stammered Linda, bewildered and carried away by this torrent of passion. 'But O! it was a dreadful pity to spoil your hair.'

'If I had a boy's dress, now,' continued Laurence, with growing animation, 'I'd go to Professor Nielsen to-morrow, and ask leave to play to him. Then, if he told me to give it up, I would.'

'There, there, child,' said Linda soothingly, fearing the little girl's distress was turning her brain; 'you don't know what you are saying. You're overstrained and overtired, and no wonder. Come to sleep now, dear, and be sure that, chance what may, I shall stand by you.'

Laurence crept in after her. But it was long before either of the girls could sleep. There was no blind to the room, and streaks of light from outside still shone upon the floor. Presently Linda began to laugh softly.

'You look so funny!' she said, 'with your cropped hair. I don't know but what you might pass for a boy, indeed. It's my belief that if you had a suit of clothes and went to the Professor, no one would know but that you were.'

Laurence sat up, meditating.

'Could I, do you think?'

'Why not?' said Linda, diverted by the idea, but a trifle dis-

concerted by the serious way in which her little friend took up everything. 'We'll think it over to-morrow, and hit on some plan or other, never fear.'

'No other will do,' persisted the child earnestly. 'Listen, Linda: to-morrow you shall get the money that is waiting for me at the bank, and buy me some boy's clothes; that can't be difficult in a big town like Bleiburg. Then I can go to Professor Nielsen, and he will hear me play.'

She recalled now how once at the Villa Rondinelli she had dressed up in a suit of Val's, for fun, and gone to Mr. Romer and he had not recognised her.

Linda laughed, which encouraged the child.

'I might be your brother, you know,' said Laurence, nestling down again.

'My little brother,' murmured Linda caressingly. 'How fond I should be of you!'

'Let me be your brother,' said Laurence; 'then I might stay with you, and no one would ever suspect—'

'O, if only you were in reality!' cried Linda suddenly. 'I could love you, I think—but Bruno!'

'Well?'

'I cannot love him, dear. He is so strange, so violent, like my father. Then his dreadful opinions. He is an Internationalist, you know; but you must tell no one, it is a secret.'

'What is an Internationalist?' asked Laurence innocently.

'O, I hardly know myself; but Bruno is always meddling with dangerous things—joining in plots and secret societies—he does nothing but get himself into trouble and frighten me. He never was kind to me,' and she pressed her soft cheek against Laurence's.

'Dear Linda,' said the child, and Linda felt the little arm

stealing round her neck, 'I *should* like to stay with you.'

'We'll see, we'll see,' murmured Linda. 'Now hush, and good-night.'

And the two went off to sleep, Linda's fair head leaning against her companion's that rested happily on her shoulder.

Professor Nielsen's apartments were popularly known among the satirical musical students at Bleiburg as 'Paradise.' Their aspect, dark, unswept, cramped, and disorderly, was as forbidding as a Neapolitan prison. Still they were apparently deemed delightful by their owner, who never left them if he could help it, nor for years had been known to set foot in the town, except to go to and fro between his domicile and the Academy over the way. The sight of him stalking along the High-street would have created almost as much consternation there, as though the colossal bronze Neptune on the fountain in the market-place, and which he resembled exactly, had come down to consort with the burghers.

He and his habits remained a mystery, and as a mystery gave rise to such wild stories of his eccentricities, that in Bleiburg he went for a kind of Croquemitaine, and mothers made use of his name to frighten their babies into good behaviour. The students who had the fearful honour of access to his den helped to keep up his ogre's reputation by the true stories they circulated of his violent temper, and which did not lose in the circulation. He was reported to have broken a dull pupil's violin over his head, to have flung an impertinent one down-stairs. Again and again had his connection with the Academy been on the verge of a rupture, but his fame as a violin-teacher stood

so high, that the authorities continued to humour him, and he to be sought out eagerly by enterprising students. No one like him, it was said, for making players, though as a player himself he had failed to get his deserts, and thrown up the sponge in disgust. The disappointment, together with certain domestic disasters, had embittered his life, and it was not without reason that he had the name of a cynic, a woman-hater, and a half-lunatic.

In truth the Professor, though a man of Spartan habits, had his pet luxury, with which he had pampered himself, till he had become its abject slave,—the indulgence of his own individuality in all things great and small. Self-worship had led to every sort of eccentric development (little whims, peculiarities, inclinations; never resisted, having grown irresistible), such as left him practically no choice but to shut himself up. To jostle about among his fellow-creatures would now have been as severe a trial for one party as for the other.

Professor Nielsen was at breakfast. Clad in dressing-gown and slippers, he sat pouring out some cold coffee that stood on the stove, when Lisbet, his housekeeper, came to notify to him that visitors were waiting in the next room. He was in no mood for visitors, and would have sent these away on the spot, only he had an inherent dislike to breaking an appointment; and these came by appointment, and punctual too.

A day or two ago he had heard from a brother professor of a new pupil, Linda Visconti, who had just joined, passing her entrance examination with flying colours. It was she who was coming this morning to bring a little boy, her brother, said to have wonderful talent on the violin, and for whom

she wished to solicit advice or instruction from Nielsen.

Now the latter was kindness itself to beginners, ever ready to help them to help themselves; but to-day he was in a bad humour, and had never felt less inclined to enact the foster-father to budding genius. He had on pessimistic spectacles, and saw everything in the light of his own cantankerousness.

How many infant prodigies had he seen effloresce into full-grown nonentities! The fable of the Ugly Duckling reversed is constantly happening in the history of the fine arts. He felt a prospective dislike to Linda Visconti's brother, and instead of going to receive the applicants, he stayed ruminating how best he could turn them over to some other professor, and get out of the affair.

Suddenly the old man—he had already kept them waiting half an hour—was roused from his brown study by musical sounds in the adjoining room, sounds of his own violin, which he had left lying out there on the table, touched by a strange hand, and playing from an *ms.* that stood open upon the desk.

He started up, electrified with indignation; then bumped down in his easy-chair again, with diabolical satisfaction on his face. Aha, now he would ring and send Lisbet to order out of the house the insolent youngster who—

But his hand on the bell-rope, his wrathful sentence, were stayed simultaneously, as something took an abrupt hold of his attention.

The *attaque* of the player in there had struck him. Nielsen's long teaching-experience had quickened his perceptions to the point when from a single phrase he could more than half foretell the general worth or worthlessness

of the whole. He listened on. Well, there was a purity of tone, a command of resources behind that door most unusual in wonder-children.

He was now attending almost eagerly. The composition was full of difficulties—passages it might puzzle an advanced student to decipher correctly off-hand.

Meantime, his face would have made a precious study for an actor. First, the tremendous frown of displeasure altered into one of fixed attention, which rapidly became significant of powerful interest and cleared the way for a beam of approval. His rugged lips, compressed at first to smother an audible explosion of rage, relaxed, not into a smile—Nielsen knew not smiles—but a contortion indicative of pleasure. His countenance had undergone a complete metamorphosis, corresponding with the march of feeling within him.

The impertinence that had infuriated him was forgiven and forgotten; the new-comer had justified his extraordinary daring by his extraordinary ability.

He would not interrupt now, but bent forwards, listening with the intense and entire application of mind peculiar to those whose energies have all been appropriated to one purpose.

As Laurence sounded the last bar of the movement, the curtain over the door opposite was lifted, and the Professor's huge figure towered on the threshold.

Linda shrank as if a jungle tiger had looked in. Till now she had been taken up with a mischievous delight at the audacity of the child, but the sight of this formidable being nearly sent her flying out of the house. His stature looked colossal in the small room, and two strides brought him across it.

He hardly saw her; his eyes were fastened on her young companion in loose boyish dress, who stood by the desk, still clasping the violin, ever a friend in need.

'How long have you learnt?' he asked brusquely.

'Always,' said Laurence simply. 'I am twelve now.'

'I am told you want to become my pupil,' he continued.

'To become your pupil,' said Laurence steadily.

'So you shall'—and he gave a curious chuckle—'for all, that is, that I can teach you.'

He proceeded to put some questions as to the method and previous studies of the new-comer. Laurence's frank fearless answers pleased him well.

'You have come from Milan with your sister,' he said, for the first time deigning to look at Linda; looking away again directly with an expression so uncomplimentary, that she felt as if a book had been thrown at her head. 'Allori taught you, I suppose?'

'Yes,' said Laurence, quaking inwardly at what might have been a critical moment. But the incident of the young-lady petitioner of a week ago had as good as faded out of the Professor's mind. Such applications were getting common now, and he had one stereotyped form of refusal, which he returned to all. Linda's name had not been mentioned in Allori's letter, which, moreover, Nielsen, seeing at once what it concerned, had never read through.

As for Laurence herself, a change, Linda remarked, seemed to have come over the child beyond that of mere shorn hair and boy's disguise. It was as if in concealing her girlish nature she had indeed put by part of herself, leaving those characteristics, and those only, to speak for her

which boys and girls alike may share. At this moment she stood before the Professor a student simply.

The delicacy of the pale thin face was relieved by a distinctive strength of outline. Above all, the perfect simplicity and quiet unconsciousness of expression and manner—enhanced by contrast with Linda's coquettish beauty, and the shade of meretriciousness in that beauty itself—suggested a comparison between these two as young types of masculine and feminine art, with a strong advantage on the side of the former.

But aesthetic subtleties were not in the Professor's line. To him the new pupil was interesting merely as a possible high-class musical machine. He felt as if he had discovered a new force, and had next to consider how to apply it.

'You have been well taught,' he said bluntly. 'Come to me to-morrow at nine.'

And he dismissed them summarily, taking no more separate notice of Linda than of her umbrella.

'My stars!' ejaculated the young lady, when they were safe and sound in the street. 'I wouldn't be you, Laurence, to have to do with such a monster as that. I haven't got over my first fright at the sight of him. He'll swallow you up alive one of these days.'

'He does look fierce,' Laurence admitted. 'But they say there's no master like him.'

'I should hope not,' said Linda devoutly; 'one of that sort is enough. He would make me so nervous that I shouldn't be able to bring out a note. What courage you must have! But I expect even you, had you *seen* the savage, would have thought twice before you dared to touch his violin.'

'I couldn't help it, Linda, as I saw it lying there; it seemed as if we had been waiting a year, and every moment I felt more certain he would refuse to see me, as he did before. Then I thought the violin was looking at me, and I saw it say, "*I can bring him. Try; it is your only chance.*" So I did as it told me.'

'Well, it was all for the best, as it turned out,' sighed Linda thankfully. 'But I thought I should have fainted when he came glowering in. I wish you joy of your master, Laurence, but I like mine best. See, there he goes!' and she bowed gracefully, as on the opposite side there went by Rudolph Erlanger, the beloved of rising songstresses and music-mad amateurs—a lithe, little, oiled, curled, dark-haired dandy, with the most amiable looks and plausible manners in the world.

'He reminds me of a nice French monkey we had at the Villa Rondinelli,' said Laurence innocently; 'it would do any kind of tricks it was taught.'

Linda laughed.

'And yours me of some big sea-monster. At the Academy they all call him old Nep, you know, after the statue in the square. But we won't quarrel over our professors. Erlanger is an angel—thinks most highly of my voice, and says I've a brilliant career before me. Don't you wish you were a singer, Laurence?'

Laurence did not know, and made no reply; but Linda chattered on merrily, chiefly to herself, as they threaded their way through the streets to the house of one Schmidt, organist, where for a week she and her quasi-brother had been domesticated.

It was all Linda's doing. She had a happy knack of seizing on a plan, starting and carrying it out in a resolute practical man-

ner, and before her energy could have time to cool. She had taken a genuine fancy to Laurence, and threw herself heart and soul into the child's wishes and welfare. The notion of disguising to obtain access to the refractory Professor was irresistible to her youthful imagination and love of adventure; and she foresaw no insuperable difficulties—none, at least, for to-morrow and the next day, beyond which it was never her habit to look.

Laurence should pass for her brother, and live with her wherever she should take her lodgings. They were utter strangers in Bleiburg, and arriving in the dusk had been seen by no one but the servant at the inn. Linda engaged to baffle the latter, a dull-witted German maid-of-all-work, and so to disguise the child that Lisbet, the Professor's dragoness, should not know her again.

To settle her own affairs first, then to procure for Laurence the required disguise to replace the clothes pawned at Lucerne, was the work of a morning. The right lodgings were as speedily found and engaged. In the organist's house was a spare cupboard of a room next to Linda's own, which he was glad to let her have for a mere trifle extra. Her fluency and gay good-humour and address smoothed the way, and the same night had seen the two scholars established under their new roof, agreed to join purses and fortunes for as long as might be.

It was with curiosity and some trepidation that Linda, the day after their first interview with the testy Professor, awaited the child's return from the second. It was very long; at last Laurence came in with a radiant countenance.

'He says there is no need for me to join the Academy at present. He says he will take

me for the next year as his pupil for nothing. Linda, Linda, sha'n't we be happy now !'

Linda took the little violinist in her arms and kissed her.

'*Vogue la galère !*' she said gaily. 'I told you I should set everything right for you soon.'

CHAPTER V.

TWO LIVES.

THERE was an attic in the organist's house where the girls lodged, a little lumber-room, already over-crowded with the oddments there allowed to accumulate. Latterly these had had to make way for additions, in the shape of Laurence's music-desk and Laurence, whose practising-room it became. Safe from interruption or interrupting, in this eyrie the child was to spend the best part of two years.

One little dormer-window admitted the light and commanded a wide view over the roofs of the town, away to the surrounding broad valley, with its vine-hills, low woods, and sleepy serpentine river stealing between the meadows. Within, the most volatile student could have found nothing to distract him from his work, unless it were a rat lurking in one of the dusty corners.

It was late one afternoon, the last rays of the sinking sun shone through the open lattice, falling on a curious little figure in a loose boyish blouse perched upon one of the boxes piled about the room. Here Laurence was wont to stay practising almost without a break from morning to night, in such a state of abstraction as only two studies, music and mathematics, can produce, fiddling away to an audience of rats, who listened

spell-bound or stopped their ears as might be, during the patient iteration of scales and exercises. Often, whilst her fingers were thus mechanically occupied, her imagination, as though to make up for the monotony of her work, would run riot, now transforming the attic into a little world, and peopling it with fancy shapes ; now leading her a chase across country and continent as wild as the ride the devil's huntsman led his victim in pursuit of the fabulous princess. No treat, to the child, like such random flights. Had man's progenitors wings, of which you inherit the memory, prompting you to conceive yourself flitting, Ariel-fashion, over hill, over dale, with no impediments to check you or drag you down ?

Laurence's fantasies found no expression on the violin. Nielsen's method forbade as yet any deviation from the strictest line of study. His pupils must learn the full use of their wings before they might try how far they might carry them. But her idiosyncrasy oozed out on music-paper, to the weekly vexation of soul of Linda's harmony-master, who had charitably offered to correct the young violin-student's compositions. These attempts, though condemn them he must as erratic and unlawful, showed an originality of ideas and mastery of materials with which he, an average teacher of average scholars, was unaccustomed to have to deal.

She was following such a tone-fancy now, a bright, vaporuous, musical bubble floating along—

Linda came dancing like sunshine into the room, and the bubble burst.

'Laurence, tea-time ! Do you hear ?'

Laurence looked up, with a little nervous frown, at the abrupt awakening.

'I'll tell you what,' continued Linda reprovingly, 'if it wasn't for me, my little brother, you'd very soon starve to death, simply by forgetting to eat. I left your dinner out for you down-stairs, when I went off this morning to the Academy; and coming back now, I find it untouched. You goose!'

'I forgot,' Laurence confessed, 'till so late I thought it wasn't worth while to go down, as it would be tea-time directly.'

'It won't do,' Linda affirmed, shaking her head. 'You will grow thin and die. What would become of my voice, I wonder, if I were to try and live, like you, on the notes in the sunbeam? Come now, at all events, I know you're always ready for tea.'

Their frugal meal, of weak tea and thin slices of bread-and-butter, they took in a large class-room on the floor below, where the organist taught his pupils, but of which his young tenants were allowed free use at other times. The regular habits and lengthy repasts of the Schmidt establishment being found as incompatible with Linda's Academy engagements as with Laurence's passion for study, they two had often to snatch meals at odd times, and seldom put in their appearance at the family dinner and supper. How much pleasanter to picnic, as now, in that big music-room, bare but for an organ at one end, a piano at the other, and a long table in the middle! But the high dark wainscoting gave it a warm and comfortable look, and the long curtainless windows opened on a carved wooden balcony that was picturesque.

'The Forsters have asked me to go out with them to-morrow,' said Linda, naming some Bleiburg friends of hers, 'for the day.'

'Shall you go?'

'To be sure. It is a water-party up the river, quite a grand affair. Everybody is asked. It will be delightful.'

'When shall you get home?'

'O, not before bed-time. And I'll tell you what it is, Laurence darling, if you'll be a dear good child, you'll just write my musical composition for me. There's the examination coming on, and where I shall be I dread to think. I don't seem to get on one bit.'

'You see,' she resumed after a pause, 'I really *cannot* work hard like you. It would make my head ache, and when my head aches I can't sing. After all, why should I bother myself with fugues and canons and things! My voice is getting stronger and stronger every day. Only that tiresome Erlanger will insist that I've a good deal to learn before I come out. I don't see it.'

What was her voice but a gift to procure her ease and pleasure! and was she not already qualified to sing men's money out of their pockets, not to say their heads off their shoulders? Such was the sum of Miss Visconti's professional philosophy.

'Now you aren't to go running off to the attic,' said Linda, when they had finished tea, barring the door playfully. 'If you must practise, practise here. Let us try something together; we shan't be disturbed. Papa Schmidt has gone to his club, mamma Schmidt is at a coffee-party, and the little Schmidts are in bed.'

And she sat down to the piano. Her voice, less powerful than she chose to imagine, was of a most enchanting quality, sweet and full in tone, though giving less promise of stay and endurance. In vain did her master impress on her the necessity of caution in its exercise, lest it should play her false by wearing out prematurely.

The idea was inconceivable to her, and the temptation to astonish herself and others by taxing it to the utmost not to be resisted.

If walls have ears, those had a treat that evening. Singing at home, as good as alone, free from the shadow of nervousness or consciousness, Linda sang her best—the public singer's best, of which the public knows nothing. Her upper notes had the exquisite purity of a chorister's treble in its prime, with more richness and strength. Laurence's violin-playing, which had already the firmness of an older hand, afforded better support to the voice than Linda's own far from faultless accompaniment, in that quaint old German *Miserere*. A few solemn words set to a florid discursive melody, yet not so incongruous a union to those who can perceive the stately plan underlying the *fioriture*; arabesque mouldings on a pillar of stone.

'Laurence, gracious powers! what are you thinking of?'

For Laurence, usually firm as a rock and steady as old Time, had broken off short in a phrase, like an organ when the wind in the pipes expires.

'In the name of all that's awful, what's wrong?' repeated Linda, as she turned, aghast at the child's moonstruck look.

'I saw—I thought there was a face at the glass,' said Laurence, pointing with her bow to one of the tall windows, 'and it startled me frightfully.'

Linda shuddered.

'Now, for mercy's sake, child, don't take to having visions and things, or you'll be the death of me. I was always so terrified of ghosts.'

'It wasn't a ghost,' said Laurence contemptuously, 'not the very least like a ghost. Why, it was a man.'

'A man!' echoed Linda, not reassured; 'a robber, a house-breaker perhaps. I must speak to Schmidt. I always thought those balconies unsafe. They run, almost without a break, to the end of the street. He must have the windows fastened up immediately.'

'I don't believe it was a house-breaker,' objected Laurence; 'he looked too young for that.'

'A young man?' said Linda, in an altered tone, and with curiosity. 'Why, Laurence, what was he like?'

'I can't tell—a very young man, with a pale face and dark hair; he was staring in with the strangest gray eyes. But the moment I looked it was gone.'

Linda fell into thoughtful silence. Presently, at her suggestion, they went on with their music. But Linda from time to time kept darting furtive glances at the window, as though half in hope that she might sing the phantom back again. Nothing appeared, and at last she left the piano, saying she was tired and no longer in a singing mood.

'The Forsters are certain to be decked out within an inch of their lives,' she said to herself aloud. 'I know they asked me hoping I'd play dowdy to their finery. I've set my heart on disappointing them.'

She ran off to her room, and fetched in her one holiday dress. Who shall tell the many ingenious metamorphoses of form and colour it had undergone in a twelve-month? Linda hated needlework, but loved finery more; and millinery was the sole form of work she could stick to patiently and contentedly for hours.

She, like Laurence, had her day-dreams, to sweeten such hours of labour. They were dreams of coming years of luxurious idleness,

when she should have sung her way to fame and fortune, and look back with a laugh upon past privations and obscurity. To be clothed in purple and fine linen, and fare sumptuously every day, was, if not the summit of her ambition, all she set before her at present.

As she sat at her sewing she kept questioning Laurence about the apparition. Was it a handsome face? Was she sure it was a stranger? The child was absorbed in a musical composition-exercise, and gave such answers as did little to gratify Linda's curiosity. The subject was dropped, and by the next morning forgotten by both.

Early on the morrow, Laurence, who had already been practising two hours in the attic, was surprised by Linda appearing at the door, in bewitching holiday array. She carried a cup of coffee and a roll.

'I've brought you your breakfast,' she said, setting it down on a box, 'lest you should forget. But you sha'n't taste a bit unless you tell me I look a love, and shall make those German young women go wild with envy.'

'They're too dull and too good-natured,' said Laurence, 'or I think they would. Why, Linda, what beautiful gold earrings! They look quite new.'

She reddened slightly.

'These? O, they were a present I had the other day.'

'A present! who from?' asked Laurence.

'One of our Academy students. Young Jonas, the prize violin-pupil. You know he's a great admirer of mine.'

'And you wear them?'

'Of course. Why not? They're made to be worn, I suppose!' she laughed.

Laurence seemed to have no reason on the tip of her tongue.

'You're a child. When you're older you'll understand. Public singers are always receiving presents. It's the usual thing.'

'But you aren't a public singer.'

'But I shall be in six months.'

Why not steal a march and begin the pleasant part a little beforehand? There's no harm.' And she pulled out one earring and looked at it affectionately, but not in the least sentimentally, remarking, 'I can't bear the boy; I can't even pretend to. The most I can do for him is to wear his gifts. I'm sure he ought to feel honoured. So good-bye, my little brown mouse. Of course, whilst you're my brother, you're bound to look after me,' she concluded playfully; 'but don't, for pity's sake, be so particular as poor Bruno, or I'll disown you, I will indeed.'

Half an hour later Laurence, from the attic-window, saw the little pleasure-barge go by down the river, the deck filled with gaily-dressed ladies, and gentlemen to correspond.

The watcher beheld the panorama without envy. To Laurence social amusements were as yet but a brilliant picture-writing that conveyed no definite meaning. It was now nine o'clock, time to go to Nielsen for that morning's lesson.

On going up the porch of his house the pupil was met by startling sounds of angry voices and scuffling on the landing above. The next instant a young gentleman came flying headlong downstairs, as though his course had been forcibly accelerated,—Ixion hurled out of heaven by Jupiter. Laurence recognised Jonas, the risen star of the Academy, and another of Nielsen's scholars. He was a youth of a surprisingly impetuous temper, hard and smooth as the bronze and silver of the medals he annually carried off.

But for once his spirits seemed conspicuously ruffled by the alteration.

'Look out for yourself,' said he to his fellow-pupil, stopping on the threshold and panting for breath. 'The old ruffian has got one of his mad fits on him, and is ready to smash whatever comes in his way, your head as likely as not. I've done with him. I gave him fair warning once before. I shall stand his insults no longer, and am going to complain to the Principal. I told him so, and that drove him wild. Seriously, I wouldn't go near him just now, if I were you.' And exit Ixion into the street, rearranging his coat-collar and cuffs that had suffered in the skirmish.

Jonas was a lad whose patronising airs exposed him specially to the detestation of his juniors. Laurence felt a perverse childish pleasure in scouting his caution to-day, and walked up-stairs unhesitatingly to confront the choleric Professor, who greeted the new-comer with the most pacific grimace his features knew how to put on.

'Come, my child, and let us begin at once,' said he, with a sigh of relief; and the lesson proceeded smoothly. His wrath against that froward pupil of his had been two years brewing, and for having vented it at length he felt better and happier than he had done for some time, like an athlete after hard exercise. He was pleased to be extraordinarily well satisfied with Laurence that morning. Nielsen never praised. 'Not altogether badly done,' was a portentous compliment coming from his lips, and beyond it he was hardly on record to have gone. So when presently, after listening awhile with a more contemplative and less censorious expression than usual, he observed musingly,

'You have worked well, very well; you have surprised me,' the effect on his pupil was that of a kind of moral thunder and lightning.

'We must be thinking of the future,' he resumed. 'Next term you enter the Academy for a year. I wish you to play at their concerts.'

Laurence changed colour, and pleaded quickly, deprecatingly, 'Not yet; may I not wait? Another term at least.'

It was not Nielsen's way to allow his pupils a will of their own; still he was rather surprised than displeased at this reluctance to be put forward, and answered hesitatingly,

'Well, I shall see; perhaps the delay will do no harm,' yielding momentarily to a modesty he approved and had found so rare; 'but mind, the time must very soon come. You will have to accustom yourself to performing in public. You are quite competent. To think that that cockcomb Jonas—'

'I met him on the stairs,' said Laurence, who, as the Professor seemed in such a wondrously humane mood, felt moved to put in a word of intercession for the culprit. 'You have not dismissed him?'

The experiment was a rash one. Nielsen rose angrily, with such harshness and sternness in his face that Laurence wondered and shrank aghast. The stories of his furious temper seemed to become suddenly credible.

'How dare you name him to me?' he said violently. 'Never do so again. The boy is a cheat, with a soul of slime. That sort would steal your heart's blood to refine their sugar. He will never be more than a mountebank at his craft, but he will get on. He aspires to become an impostor, so

clever that no one shall find him out, and so he will sneak into the shoes of his betters. I took him for his father's sake,—whom I knew,—at a time when he could play no more than my poodle. I have done my best with Jonas, and he has done his worst with me, and his worst has proved stronger than my best. It is always so.' He stopped; a settled gloom overspread his face. Confirmed cynic though he was, each additional proof of human unworthiness flung in his face could embitter him afresh, awakening old griefs, opening up a mortifying retrospect. Even his young listener guessed dimly that the sudden outburst provoked, though levelled at the ingratitude and littleness of mind of a single pupil, owed its virulence to older and darker scores. Jonas's disaffection was, indeed, but a new link forged and added to an old chain, and shaking its irons, which had entered so deeply into the old man's soul.

'Art, my boy,' resumed Nielsen slowly, 'is twofold, like Freemasonry. Open, after a fashion, to all. Be as careless, as vain, as self-seeking as you like, none the less you may enter the fraternity, amuse yourself with its trivialities, call yourself artist, shine with light borrowed from the glory of an absent divinity. When all are content with this, art must die out. Its secrets will be lost. The immortal part, its depth and significance, are mysteries preserved by another order, the initiated.' He interpreted [the child's wistful gaze aright, and it provoked only a derisive pity as he said interrogatively, 'You think you would like to be one of the few?']

Laurence's silence answered him. Nielsen laughed, then became suddenly grave. He was

standing up, looking down on his little pupil; he might, indeed, have been the stern apostle of some secret religious order, warning some eager proselyte candidate for admission of the fiery ordeal through which he would first have to pass. The scene was a singular one.

'Genius is a beautiful thing,' he said, 'and a brilliant and beloved thing, a gift very sweet to possess. Is it not so?'

'It should be,' said Laurence inaudibly.

'But I tell you it is not,' he burst out fiercely; 'that genius means misery; that if you have any spiritual power or insight that marks you out from the rest of the world, it means, first, that the gods hate you. You have filched something from them, and must pay in your own human coin, that they may be even with you, and look down upon you yet. Say you have served music till you can beat Apollo at his own weapons. Well, but your health, your nerves are spoilt for ever. You envy the labourer in the fields. You will never know a day without pain, an hour without chagrin. What is harmless to others has a thousand stings for you, more sensitive than they. Next, as to the world, and how well it will love you. Say you have given it divine music, made it your debtor for ever. The world hates to be under an obligation. Your enemies will poison the public mind against you. You become an open mark for calumny and wrongs of all sorts, such as would be a fit expiation for the vilest crimes. It is the fee you pay for great gifts. This if you are great enough to force the world to acknowledge you. If not, it will treat you with ridicule and neglect, for ranging yourself on the side of truth when quackery is having its day. You

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want to be an artist, my little friend. [I want you to know what that means. I would not send a son of mine to a strange land without some notice of the sort of welcome he was likely to find there.

'Have you any friends? you will lose them. If they are ambitious they will envy you. The calumnies you will attract will alienate those you love, do what you will. The artist has no family, no love. There is no mistress, no wife so mercilessly jealous as Art. She claims you body and soul.

'And what is your reward? Say you succeed. It gives you pleasure at first. But pleasure must go on increasing, or it decays. This one soon dies. You find you cannot exist without applause and triumphs, but that you can relish them no longer. You must strain every nerve to win what can no longer make your heart beat faster. The end is always the same: you are forgotten, eclipsed, and perhaps by your inferiors; but new names, new faces, new tricks are what the public want, and will have. They can do without sterling merit. You will die in obscurity, perhaps in need, as many of the chosen have done, no longer envied, but an object of pity to the sorriest Philistine. This, boy, is an artist's life and death.'

'No more than this?'

'No more,' said Nielsen gloomily. 'It is because I love you, child, that I speak these truths to you, and bid you see if you cannot choose some happier path.'

'It is too late,' said Laurence rapidly. 'I did not choose the life—it chose me. There is no other I could live.'

'Is it so?' he muttered. 'Well,' he placed his hand on the small head, and the soured old musician

looked at the eager trusting face, thinking of the days when he too was all faith and enthusiasm in a glorious future that had so betrayed him.

'I am a fool,' he exclaimed suddenly to himself, 'to talk like this to a child, who can know nothing, understand nothing—it is impossible. There, leave me now,' he concluded, in his ordinary dry imperative tone, 'and if you like, forget what I have said.'

Laurence left the house with a heavy heart. It was not that the dark picture held up by Nielsen had left a lasting corresponding impression. The child might, as he said, be too young to grasp the truths spoken, just as he was too old to perceive what Laurence's young instincts confidently asserted, that it was not the whole truth either. But there was a cloud on the near horizon that troubled her.

Two years had slipped by rapidly, and all had gone smoothly and well. Laurence had grown accustomed to her strange part, and, leading a life as secluded as Nielsen himself, had found it so easy, as half to forget that sooner or later it must bring about a dilemma far worse than that caused by Nielsen's simple rejection of the girl-applicant two years ago. The crisis seemed to be coming all at once, and the child's heart sank at the prospect of the revelations that would have to be made to the Professor. The thunderbolts he had let fall on Jonas's head seemed light in comparison with what his favourite scholar might expect, not to say deserve.

On turning the corner of the quiet Brunnen Strasse, Laurence was suddenly accosted by a stranger.

'Hold, little fellow; a word with you, please.'

clever that no one shall find him out, and so he will sneak into the shoes of his betters. I took him for his father's sake,—whom I knew,—at a time when he could play no more than my poodle. I have done my best with Jonas, and he has done his worst with me, and his worst has proved stronger than my best. It is always so.' He stopped; a settled gloom overspread his face. Confirmed cynic though he was, each additional proof of human unworthiness flung in his face could embitter him afresh, awakening old griefs, opening up a mortifying retrospect. Even his young listener guessed dimly that the sudden outburst provoked, though levelled at the ingratitude and littleness of mind of a single pupil, owed its virulence to older and darker scores. Jonas's disaffection was, indeed, but a new link forged and added to an old chain, and shaking its irons, which had entered so deeply into the old man's soul.

'Art, my boy,' resumed Nielsen slowly, 'is twofold, like Freemasonry. Open, after a fashion, to all. Be as careless, as vain, as self-seeking as you like, none the less you may enter the fraternity, amuse yourself with its trivialities, call yourself artist, shine with light borrowed from the glory of an absent divinity. When all are content with this, art must die out. Its secrets will be lost. The immortal part, its depth and significance, are mysteries preserved by another order, the initiated.' He interpreted the child's wistful gaze aright, and it provoked only a derisive pity as he said interrogatively, 'You think you would like to be one of the few?'

Laurence's silence answered him. Nielsen laughed, then became suddenly grave. He was

standing up, looking down on his little pupil; he might, indeed, have been the stern apostle of some secret religious order, warning some eager proselyte candidate for admission of the fiery ordeal through which he would first have to pass. The scene was a singular one.

'Genius is a beautiful thing,' he said, 'and a brilliant and beloved thing, a gift very sweet to possess. Is it not so?'

'It should be,' said Laurence inaudibly.

'But I tell you it is not,' he burst out fiercely; 'that genius means misery; that if you have any spiritual power or insight that marks you out from the rest of the world, it means, first, that the gods hate you. You have filched something from them, and must pay in your own human coin, that they may be even with you, and look down upon you yet. Say you have served music till you can beat Apollo at his own weapons. Well, but your health, your nerves are spoilt for ever. You envy the labourer in the fields. You will never know a day without pain, an hour without chagrin. What is harmless to others has a thousand stings for you, more sensitive than they. Next, as to the world, and how well it will love you. Say you have given it divine music, made it your debtor for ever. The world hates to be under an obligation. Your enemies will poison the public mind against you. You become an open mark for calumny and wrongs of all sorts, such as would be a fit expiation for the vilest crimes. It is the fee you pay for great gifts. This if you are great enough to force the world to acknowledge you. If not, it will treat you with ridicule and neglect, for ranging yourself on the side of truth when quackery is having its day. You

want to be an artist, my little friend. [I want you to know what that means. I would not send a son of mine to a strange land without some notice of the sort of welcome he was likely to find there.

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On turning the corner of the quiet Brunnen Strasse, Laurence was suddenly accosted by a stranger.

'Hold, little fellow; a word with you, please.'

Laurence pulled up short, half defiantly; the child felt intensely shy of strangers, and shunned them persistently.

'What do you want with me?' she asked, looking her interlocutor full in the face. He had accosted her in her own language.

He was well dressed, and had an easy grace of manner that did not escape the observation of the French child.

'He's not a German,' thought Laurence. 'English, perhaps.' Yet no. The recollection of Val and his malpronunciation was still vivid, and this young man's accent was irreproachable.

'You have a sister, have you not?' he continued.

'Well?'

'This is some of her property,' said he, putting a small parcel into the child's hands, 'that I want you to give back to her.'

'What is it?' asked Laurence, puzzled.

'O, jewelry,' he said carelessly, 'which she has lost.'

'Then it can't be hers,' said the child innocently; 'she had none to lose.'

'Upon my word,' he returned, laughing, 'you're rather blunt, my little man. Perhaps you'll allow that your sister knows her own things best. If she says it belongs to some one else, then I've made a mistake, and she can return it. Now, will you do my errand?'

Laurence looked from the gift to the giver, and asked simply,

'Whose errand shall I be doing?'

'Why, what a sharp little fellow you are!' he returned, laughing good-humouredly, and just touching her chin with his hand. 'Now what's your name?'

'Laurence,' the child replied, moving away.

'Well, Laurence, I hope we

shall become better acquainted in time. O, I've heard about you; you're going to be a great violin-player one of these days, are you not? Now will you do my commission to your sister?'

'I must,' said Laurence, whose ungraciousness seemed only to amuse the young man.

He nodded friendlily and was moving away, when a carriage drove by with some ladies in it. He lifted his hat. A sudden light entered Laurence's mind. It was the apparition of last night.

It was late when Linda returned from her holiday trip, in dancing spirits. Laurence related the morning adventure, which was listened to with profoundest interest. She pounced upon the parcel and opened it. There lay the prettiest little trinket—a delicate golden clasp, lyre-shaped, set with brilliants. With it came these words of dedication:

'Flowers fade too quickly. Do not refuse to keep this little token of a stranger's admiration. Let him feel, by your acceptance, that you have forgiven him for the alarm he involuntarily caused you last night. GERVASE DAMIAN.'

'Flowers fade too quickly.' A clue to a mysterious bouquet that had been sent her the other day, and which Linda, believing it to come from Master Jonas, had ruthlessly allowed to wither away on the mantelpiece. She now went up to see if any life remained in the roses. Alas, they were decaying already.

'Is the brooch yours?' asked Laurence ingenuously.

'O, it's mine, it's mine,' said Linda, laughing oddly—and here it was indeed.

CHAPTER VI.

A QUIET FAMILY.

So sedate and homely a German town as Bleiburg had small attraction for foreigners. They were almost as out of place there as white men in New Guinea, and regarded by the natives with the same sort of half-contemptuous distance and suspicion. No wonder such visitors were scarce.

It was partly on this account that Mrs. Damian, an English widow lady, had, some six months before, come to take up her weeds and her abode in Bleiburg with her son and daughter. At the time they were in deep mourning for a not very near, nor even dear, but titled relative, and it was this which had decided her on the step. In the coming period of enforced retirement she saw a presentable excuse for a move—then, also, urgently called for—of breaking up her establishment and reducing household expenses to a minimum, and of so doing without assigning motives of economy.

For the Damians, like other junior branches of very old families, were born to a life-long struggle to keep up the prestige of a high-sounding name, without either the broad lands or the Three per Cents of their elders to help them to do so.

The Damians had a good deal to keep up. Theirs was a pedigree of such obvious and unequivocal distinction as placed them above common family pride—the ostentation of it, at least—and Mrs. Damian, no patrician born, was the only one who habitually fell into the infirmity. This was natural. Her own kith and kin were obscure, not having even (she thanked Heaven for that) won for themselves an undesired notoriety, perhaps the only sort to which circumstances would

have permitted them to aspire, by some patent world-hair-restorer, or well-advertised pills. Never did a wife more emphatically leave father and mother to cleave to her husband. Mr. Damian had married her for love; and none could have thrown herself more unreservedly into his affairs and interests, nor, now he was dead, into those of his children.

The circle into which she had been cast by her marriage was not exactly one of saints or enthusiasts, or even of harmless, guileless folk. Contact with it had left her disposition with few amiable traits alive in it but one—her strong maternal affection. Mrs. Damian loved her offspring as a leopardess its cubs, and everything, even her worldly wisdom, was secondary and auxiliary to this passion. For the sake of her son, Gervase, she would have been ready to risk life and limb without a moment's hesitation. So also, to further his interest she would have stooped to meanneess or worse, without a blush or twinge of conscience. Perhaps the struggle for existence in moral feelings is nowhere to be seen more clearly at work than among women in Vanity Fair. The compunction, the delicacy, the sincerity that would have hampered Mrs. Damian in her social campaigns had rapidly been selected out of her nature. There survived a cool active head, and plenty of experience to guide her in the service of her children, who were in fact her religion.

The objects of this idolatry were, in the second place her daughter Amy, a girl of sixteen, and in the first her son, the centre of all her hopes and cares; and this love was mixed and perhaps heightened in her by a tinge of admiring fear. He was her eldest, and she had always loved

him better than the children she had lost, or than Amy who survived. Mr. Damian had died after years of ill health, and the daughter, like him, was a delicate passive creature. But some lucky conjunction of inherited qualities had bestowed on Gervase such an organization as most men would choose for themselves, if they had the choice. Never had a son given his mother more perfect satisfaction so far. In the first place he was handsome, or going to be, for even at three-and-twenty, the type of his face, although marked, was still immature. He had taken to the world like one born with a knowledge of his own element, and showed early a social talent, amounting to genius, a special gift for bending other persons to his will, which his mother valued first among all things; since with it you can get on without other ability, and without it, though great your ability, the world may none the less give you the go-by.

The present was a crisis in the relations between mother and son. The idea that Gervase should become virtually independent of her was one Mrs. Damian could hardly bear. Her prime aim had always been to render herself indispensable to him, and so far her superiority in age and experience, her feminine tact and finesse, had secured her the desired ascendancy. But she realised that, now Gervase was verging on manhood, if she would retain the influence which as his sole surviving parent she had so long exercised, she must be vigilant indeed, keep sleeplessly on the alert, tax herself to the utmost. She was ready.

On the evening of Linda's holiday, just recorded, the Damian family were assembled in the sitting-room of the suite of apart-

ments they occupied. The house was in the Brunnen Strasse, some twenty doors off the organist's. Gervase, at one end of the room, with a table and a reading-lamp to himself, seemed deep in his books. If his mother had come to Bleiburg to save money, he had come to learn German, modern languages being an indispensable acquirement for the quasi-political career on which he was intended shortly to enter in earnest. German, accordingly, he was studying, with a stubborn determination which, despite a natural aversion to labour, he could show in anything he had set his mind upon.

Amy, who could never read a book without falling asleep or making her eyes ache, was playing draughts with her mother. After some half-dozen games they took up their fancy-work for a change, chattering briskly like crickets all the while.

'What was in your letter this morning, Amy?' asked Mrs. Damian. 'I was so busy and worried when you were telling me about it that I scarcely heard what you said. Those German servants are a great trouble. The people here cannot speak their own language. The accent of the lower classes is something detestable.'

'It was from Di,' said Amy meekly.

'Yes, you told me it was from Di. What does she say? Is there any news?'

Amy drew the letter from her pocket obediently.

'What a good clear hand your cousin writes!' sighed Mrs. Damian. 'O Amy child, if only I were not so ashamed of yours! and as to your spelling, it would disgrace a charity-girl.'

'So it might, but not a Miss Damian,' was the unbreathed retort, that suggested itself to both mother and daughter.

Amy laughed, and began reading aloud :

"My own darling little Amy,—You don't deserve a single line, but you shall have a long letter all the same, naughty, neglectful child that you are ! Confess I'm of a forgiving disposition."

"When Di says that, it means she's got something she's burning to tell and must pour into cousin Amy's sympathetic ears. So she makes a virtue of necessity, and quite right too," mused Mrs. Damian, listening with quickened interest.

"Imagine your Di's delight ! I am to be presented this season, after all. Papa and mamma have talked it over, and agreed that it's perfectly absurd to keep me cooped up in the schoolroom another year."

"There's some reason behind," was Mrs. Damian's silent comment. "What can it be ?"

"The other night I went with them and Sir Adolphus Brereton, who is staying here, to a ball at the Tittertons."

"Sir Adolphus Brereton ? Mrs. Damian became keenly attentive as she thought, 'He's unmarried, powerfully connected ; likely enough that Julia has thoughts of him for Diana.'"

"I enjoyed myself immensely, immensely. You will ask about my dress. Clouds of white tulle, dear, showered with rose-leaves."

"Julia would have shown better taste in dressing her daughter at seventeen rather more simply," put in Mrs. Damian disapprovingly aloud.

"Of all my partners I had the greatest fun with Mr. Sparkleton, who knows everybody, and is as amusing as possible. Do you

remember that clever Miss Blenkinsopp who always carried off the honours from me at our classes ? How I used to hate and envy her, poor thing ! I could never do so again if I tried. She was there last night—such an object, dear !—in verdant green tarletan, with stiff-looking decorations of sickly white, like a chalk drawing of a five-barred gate on a grass-green ground, Mr. Sparkleton said. Here is her picture, dancing, exactly."

"See, mamma," said Amy, laughing at the droll water-colour caricature below.

"Yes, very funny. Di was always a clever girl," sighed Mrs. Damian.

Too clever, she feared sometimes, when diagnosing this damsel, the daughter-in-law of her heart's-desire. For Di was rich. It was not for nothing that Julia Damian had married the third son of Francombe, the Bradford ironmonger, and her relations countenanced the misalliance. Mrs. Damian, who thought it would be well not to let the Francombe fortune go out of the family, had her private plans for next winter, and was rather disconcerted to hear of Di's premature appearance in the matrimonial market.

"I danced the first quadrille with Sir Adolphus. They tell me it was a distinction, as he seldom dances at all. He has just come back from Berlin, and stays with us a few days longer. Now don't go and imagine to yourself that I'm in love with him."

"*Qui s'excuse, s'accuse,*" parenthesised Mrs. Damian.

"For fear you should, I had better tell you at once he is twice my age, and not in the least good-looking. Here is his picture."

'Not so witty or well hit off as the other,' remarked Mrs. Damian.

"Besides being silent and shy," continued Amy, reading on, "you would have thought it was *his* first ball and not mine. Little Sparkleton waltzes divinely, and tells the most amusing anecdotes. But mamma says he's merely an adventurer in society. I wonder what she means. Good-bye now, dearest Amy.—Ever your loving
"DIANA."

'That's all, except the postscript.'

'Let me hear the postscript, pray,' said Mrs. Damian. 'It won't be the least important part, depend upon that.' And the obedient Amy read aloud :

"We leave town in June. But we shall be very gay at Larksmere this summer, and have a large party (among others papa has asked that tiresome Sir Adolphus!) staying in the house. I wish you were to be there."

'Amy, my love, just reach me my glasses. I really cannot carry the whole of Burke's *Baronetage* in my head;' and she proceeded to refresh her memory, and read, "'Brereton, Sir Adolphus, born 183-." That makes him thirty-eight—just as I thought. First cousin to Mr. Catchpole, who is to be in the Ministry when the next change comes. That means an ambassador's post for Sir Adolphus. The very match to tempt Mrs. Francombe, and Diana is her own daughter;' the words escaped her aloud.

'O mamma,' expostulated Amy, 'I wish you wouldn't talk so of Diana! I like Di. She's a nice girl.'

Mrs. Damian nodded significantly.

'I know I should like to be Di now,' sighed Amy dolefully. 'Balls in London, *fêtes* at Larksmere. O mamma, when do you think we shall go back to England?'

'I cannot tell at present. My plans are uncertain.'

'One might as well be in a convent,' said Amy plaintively.

'My dear, if I decide to immure myself here till the winter, be sure it will be for good reasons. Besides, you and Gervase are really profiting, both of you, from this voluntary exile of ours. I wish Gervase to become a thorough German scholar, and you to get on with your singing. How did the lesson with Herr Erlanger go to-day?'

'O, pretty well. Only think, mamma, he has told me everything about the girl with the beautiful voice who lives in this street, and whom we sometimes hear practising in the evenings.'

Gervase, who hitherto had heard without taking in their chatter, here just glanced up from his books for an instant, as Amy continued :

'She is a pupil at the Academy, and studying for the stage. Erlanger teaches her, and says she ought to become a great operatic singer. Then she has a little brother or cousin, who is a sort of musical genius—quite a child, but plays the flute or violin or something most wonderfully. It was very interesting.'

Mrs. Damian was yawning already.

'She is an orphan,' pursued Amy. 'Her professional name is Linda Visconti; but her mother was an American.'

'An American!' ejaculated Gervase involuntarily.

Mrs. Damian glanced up at him with eyes not sleepy now, but sharp as two needles.

'American women have usually fine voices,' he said carelessly.

'And handsome faces,' she rejoined. 'Is she a pretty girl, Gervase?'

'O, very, very,' put in Amy enthusiastically; 'she has a lovely fresh face, just like her voice.'

'Poor girl! what a prospect for her!' said Mrs. Damian compassionately. 'An orphan—pretty—and on the stage!'

'Well, mamma, and why not?' pleaded Amy obstinately, who had liberal ideas. 'Why should not actresses be as good and nice as other people?'

'There, Amy, don't talk about what you don't understand. You'll allow that I've lived rather longer in the world than you have, and should know more of its ways. Now let us go to bed. I'm tired to death. Good-night, Gervase; and don't, my dearest boy, sit up too late over your books, I entreat you.'

Gervase promised to put them away directly, and did so the instant his mother and sister had shut the door. He then betook himself to a room, which, from its diminutive size, he called his smoking compartment, to ponder over his cigar on the perversity of events. Those few particulars respecting one in whom he felt interested, that had just come to his ears in so simple a manner, he had for some time been trying to obtain by more roundabout means.

His curiosity, excited by the beauty of Linda's voice, had prompted him last evening—his mother and sister chancing to be out of the way—to risk his neck along the balconies for a glimpse of the singer. The vision of that fair nymph-like creature, to eyes oppressed, like his, by long gazing on the lymphatic feminine types in which Bleiburg chiefly abounded, was like watersprings in the

desert. He, too, was becoming impatient of the present seclusion. For the last six months he had applied himself entirely to head-work, lived and fared like the bookworm that he was not. The rebound threatened to follow, and with some violence.

A wild idea crossed his brain. Gervase liked wild ideas. A certain *blasé* medium that had encompassed him from his cradle had told upon him, as was inevitable. To charm him, even at three-and-twenty, something racy and piquant was required.

The next moment he had resolved to put it into execution. What he meant to do could not be done openly. But somebody must know. Fortunately the trusty adjutant needed was at hand, and at this very minute waiting for him in his room.

The rule that no man is a hero to his *valet de chambre* admits of emphatic exceptions. Gervase meant to be one. In after years, he sometimes said to himself that if all the rest of the world were to look down upon him he should still be a hero to Lacy, his domestic.

Lacy was young. Gervase was of opinion that a young man had better select a valet of his own age—if he meant to keep him; since, if older, the servant would probably die before his master, and then the bother of training him would have to be begun all over again with his successor. But Lacy was of a discretion above his years. Already he admired his young master sincerely, profoundly, and in return was favoured with the full confidence of the latter. Indeed, haughtiness to their servants was a thing unknown in that family. It was Napoleon who, though distant to his officers, was always familiar with his soldiers. No need for a Da-

mian to arm himself in stiffness and reserve.

'Upon my word, Lacy,' began Gervase that night, 'I'm beginning to find this place infernally dull. I wonder at myself for having borne it so well.'

'Well, it's not quite so entertaining as London in the season, sir,' Lacy admitted oracularly, with a sigh that said more.

'And I think I have been dull for as long as can reasonably be expected of me. What should you say, Lacy, if I were to give a party?'

'The question is not, sir, what I would say,' remarked the faithful one gravely, 'but Mrs. Damian.'

'Mrs. Damian will say nothing, for she will hear nothing. Suppose, then, that I were, for a change, to get up a *fête*—say a water-party down the river; something which of course she will never know anything about.'

'Well, sir, I don't know but what *you* might do it,' quoth Lacy resignedly, with a sort of 'Allah is great' tone and air.

'I've made up my mind to it,' said Gervase calmly.

When Gervase's mind was made up Lacy knew that persuasion never paid; it was his cue to give over advising, and aid and abet in the plan with all his might.

'But it will all come out, and my young master get himself into hot water, as sure as death,' he thought. 'Well, sir,' he observed aloud, 'if I may venture to say so, I think it's a very intrepid scheme of yours.'

'And I shall require you, Lacy, to take round the notes of invitation, arrange everything with the boatmen, and get what you can that's eatable out of the horrors these German shops provide. I needn't tell you what's wanted. You've been with me to Maidenhead more than once.'

Anything so appallingly vulgar as a wink would have seemed as inadmissible to Lacy as to his master. It was the merest reflex action, the faintest convulsion of the eyelid, by which Lacy, as Gervase was looking the other way, implied that it was not the first time he had been thus commissioned.

'All the same, sir, how you're to do it, and Mrs. Damian not to know, does pass my comprehension.'

'It seems to me, Lacy, I might play any extraordinary pranks in the town that I chose, and she never be the wiser. She never goes out, and my sister takes the same walk with Bessy every day. They refuse to see any society; won't know any of the people here; just tolerate a friend or two I've picked up among the professors' families. I'd wager anything that I set the Saale on fire, and she will see the first news of it a week afterwards in the *Bleiburg Gazette*—or would if she read it, which, by the way, she never does.'

Still Lacy, for his own part, thought the proposed freak extremely wild. But he had noticed that Gervase was subject to such outbreaks now and then; and an attendant, who wished to render himself useful, indispensable to his master, must note and humour his individuality.

Fortune, that favours the brave, was preparing to play Gervase a good turn. Amy had been complaining of toothache, and not ten days later a visit to the dentist became imperative. As there was no practitioner of much repute in Bleiburg, Mrs. Damian decided to take her daughter over to the capital, a few hours by rail. They would start about noon, remain away the night, returning the following morning.

'Did I not tell you, Lacy, that I should manage it?' said Gervase triumphantly. 'Here are the notes you have to leave. You must wait for the answers. And mind you don't blunder with the addresses. Your German seems to me extremely shaky still. The date fixes itself—Wednesday. Where's the almanac?' and he read aloud, "'June 4th, birthday of George III.; St. Petros's-day; eclipse of the moon.'" Excellent!

'What a lark!' thought Lacy, brightening, as he went on his errand.

That afternoon, Linda and Laurence were alone in the music-room, Linda groaning over a blotted harmony exercise, when the servant-girl brought the latter a note, saying the messenger was waiting below.

'Mr. Gervase Damian requests the pleasure of Mademoiselle Visconti's company at a water-party on the Saale on Wednesday next, to meet Professor and Madame Erlanger and other friends. The guests will assemble at the pier at twelve o'clock.

'Mr. Damian hopes particularly that Laurence will accompany his sister, and ventures to ask that he will be so good as to bring his violin.'

Linda's eyes glistened as she read. Then she reflected doubtfully. As a pupil of the Academy, and under supervision, she was forced to have regard to other things besides her reckless love of amusement. So she scrutinised

the hand and address, read again, 'to meet Professor and Madame Erlanger,' and decided all was correct.

'Laurence, you write for me,' she said hurriedly. 'Your hand is so much better than mine.'

'What am I to say?'

'Say that we'll go, of course.' Then as the child seemed to hesitate, she repeated emphatically, 'It's all right! I know Mr. Damian. He came in yesterday while I was having my lesson. He's one of those rich Englishmen who are always doing odd and delightful things. This is a caprice of his. There can be no harm. Where our professors go—let alone their wives—we may follow without offence. They will be there to look after us.'

'I'll say you will go,' suggested Laurence.

'Not without you. O, you must, you must. I want my little brother to chaperon me. What delicious fun! There, dear, make haste and write:

"Miss Linda Visconti and Laurence will have the greatest pleasure in joining Mr. Damian's party next Wednesday at twelve o'clock."

When Lacy delivered this note, Gervase opened it with alacrity, curious to see what sort of a hand his Venetian beauty would write.

'Not bad, upon my word,' he affirmed; 'there's character there, at all events. Too much, perhaps, but I like what there is.'

FORTUNES MADE IN BUSINESS.

XV.

HORNBY CASTLE.

It is pleasant to turn aside from the bustling pathways of commerce, the clangour of looms, the hum of spindles, and the chatter and excitement of the exchange, to the lordly retirement and repose of an historic mansion which has been able to preserve to itself the principal features of its original surroundings. Such a mansion is Hornby Castle, which for the last twenty years has been the country seat of the head for the time being of the Foster family of Queensbury, whose successful and distinguished business careers we endeavoured to sketch in our last chapter. The sentiment and instinct which impelled the Fosters to select the time-honoured walls of Hornby as their place of rustication were in accordance with the general aims and attainments of their lives. Vigour, substantiality, and endurance had characterised their efforts to establish an industrial colony at Queensbury, a region theretofore regarded as inaccessible to commercial enterprise; and the same qualities were reflected in the towers and turrets of Hornby, with the associations of centuries long gone by clinging to them, and the prospect of abiding for centuries to come. Hornby Castle had experienced many vicissitudes, it is true, in its time; still it had escaped many of the indignities which similar ancestral halls had suffered in the course of the ebbs and flows of sovereign authority; and the connection of its owners

with the stirring events of English history had not been of a nature to imperil its existence. Most castles with the same length of pedigree have by this either fallen to decay and become the sacred haunts of poets, painters, and dreamers, or have had their beauties encroached upon and put into unhealthy shadow by the building up of great towns and cities around them. A happier destiny has attended Hornby; still

‘ This castle hath a pleasant seat, the air
Nimble and sweetly recommends itself
Unto our gentle senses ;’

and, as in the days of the Plantagenets and the Tudors, there yet lies open before it a grand sweep of verdant pasture-lands and beautiful woods, where stately rivers and quick-rushing mountain-streams divide the landscape into picturesque patches, and where secluded hamlets peep forth from bowers of clustering leafage; while, towering in kingly grandeur over all, stands mighty Ingleborough, its summit shielled by a cap of cloud. Here time has not assumed the rôle of the despoiler, and the march of modern progress has not been in antagonism to Nature. Neither factory chimneys nor smoky towns obtrude upon the view in this pleasant part of the valley of the Lune; the only evidence of the improving hand of the mechanical inventor is that which is afforded by the railway train as it rushes over its level track to or from the



HORNBY CASTLE

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ancient city of Lancaster, some nine miles distant.

Standing apart somewhat from the general field of historical inquiry and antiquarian research, Hornby has not of late years attracted that share of attention which is justly its due. Its restoration by Mr. Foster, however, to something like its old importance as a residential property, and the fact that new associations of an interesting character have grown up around it during the present century, entitle it more than ever to be held in memory. These considerations have prompted us to attempt to recall the leading incidents in the past history of the castle and of its successive owners, and to offer some account of its present condition and aspect, as well as to give a few side pictures of the village of Hornby and the surrounding neighbourhood, and of one or two notable residents.

The situation of Hornby is commanding and picturesque in the extreme. Dr. Whitaker was of opinion that it surpassed Windsor in variety of landscape. It is a prominent object for miles round, and, standing boldly forth from a mass of trees on a hill which rises in striking amplitude from the river Wenning, is clearly visible from the railway. There are several favourite points of view for seeing Hornby. Turner seems to have been particularly impressed by the beauty of the castle and its surroundings. He drew them from three or four different positions, and contrived to invest the venerable pile and the scene that it embraced with that tender and exquisite dreaminess which was at once the peculiarity and the marvel of his genius. The three drawings which he made of Hornby for Whitaker's *Richmondshire*, in 1820 and

1821, are considered, by Turner's biographer, as some of his finest works. The view of the 'Crook of Lune, leading to Hornby Castle,' shows a vast expanse of undulating pastures, with a silvery gleam of river winding through the landscape, and the sturdy towers of Hornby peering out from the side of a wooded hill. Another of Turner's views of Hornby is taken from Tatham Church; and the third of the Hornby series, being a view of 'Ingleborough from Hornby Castle Terrace,' is spoken of by Mr. Ruskin as unsurpassable. In days anterior to the railway era, indeed, Hornby Castle was always an object of attraction to travellers going northward by Lancaster; and scattered over our literature are to be found many interesting references to the place. Dr. Whitaker, taking in the entire scene at a glance, says, 'The noble windings of the river, the fruitful alluvial lands upon its banks, the woody and cultivated ridge which bounds it to the north-west, the striking feature of Hornby Castle in front, and, above all, the noble form of Ingleborough, certainly form an assemblage of features not united to compose any rival scenery in the kingdom.' The poet Gray halted in his travels to have a look at the castle. He says, 'I came to Hornby, a little town on the Wenning, over which a handsome bridge is now building; the castle, in a lordly situation, attracted me, so I walked up the hill to it: first presents itself a large, white, ordinary-sashed gentleman's house, and behind it rises the ancient keep, built by Edward Stanley, Lord Monteagle. He died about 1529, in King Henry VIII's time. It is now only a shell, the rafters are laid within it as for flooring. I went up a winding

stone staircase, in one corner to the leads, and at the angle is a stone single hexagon watch-tower, rising some feet higher, fitted up in the taste of a modern summer-house, with sash-windows in gilt frames, a stucco cupola, and on the top a vast gilt eagle, built by Mr. Charteris, the present possessor.' This was in 1765. Both the stucco cupola and the 'vast gilt eagle' are now gone, and the mansion, as well as the ancient keep, has been rendered worthy of its historic fame; the hand of the restorer having, in this case, been inspired by a desire to preserve rather than efface the old, and, in adding to, to adhere strictly to the character of the original building. Mrs. Radcliffe, the *Salvator Rosa* of British novelists, as she has been called, visited Hornby in 1795, and, with more of romantic colouring than Gray indulged in, subsequently recorded her impressions of the place. The author of the *Mysteries of Udolpho*, always at home in descriptions of ancient castles and their surroundings, speaks of the vale of Lonsdale as 'mild, delicate, and reposing, like the countenance of a Madonna.' The castle itself seemed to her 'thin' and 'toppling' as she saw it 'amongst the wood, at a considerable distance, with a dark hill rising over it.' She adds, 'What remains of the old edifice is a square gray building, with a slender watch-tower, rising in one corner like a feather in a hat, which joins the modern mansion of white stone, and gives it a singular appearance by seeming to start from the centre of its roof. In front a steep lawn descends between avenues of old wood, and the park extends along the skirts of the craggy hill that towers above.' Going back to an earlier time, we find Leland de-

scribing the castle as 'on a hill strongly buildid and well repaired;' and Camden alludes to it as 'a noble castle.'

This remarkable monument of antiquity stands not far from the little railway station of Hornby. The village has an old-world look about it, and consists of a single street or lane, bordered by neat cottages, with here and there a clump of trees breaking in upon the view. The first building of importance that the visitor comes upon in his walk towards the castle is a large new school which has been built by Mr. Foster, and seems extensive enough to accommodate the entire population, young and old. Going forward, we arrive at the Wenning, and stand upon the bridge which was in course of construction in the poet Gray's time. From this picturesque bridge of three arches the full front of the castle, with its terrace, its park, and its avenues of stately elms, planted by Lord Wemyss in the early part of the last century, stands open to the view. The river sweeps close beneath the north-east side of the castle-walls, the precipitous height which intervenes between the stream and the building at this point being covered with thick-spreading foliage; then the waters turn away from the castle, leaving ample park space in front of the edifice, and flow gently on underneath the bridge and forward till the Wenning merges itself in the more majestic Lune—'the long wand'ring Lone,' as Drayton sings, or, as the more musical Spenser calls it, 'the shallow stony Lone.' As we stand on the bridge, looking at the fine old structure 'frowning with all its battlements' down upon us, we cannot but be impressed by its imposing appearance. It is a feudal fortress with a mansion

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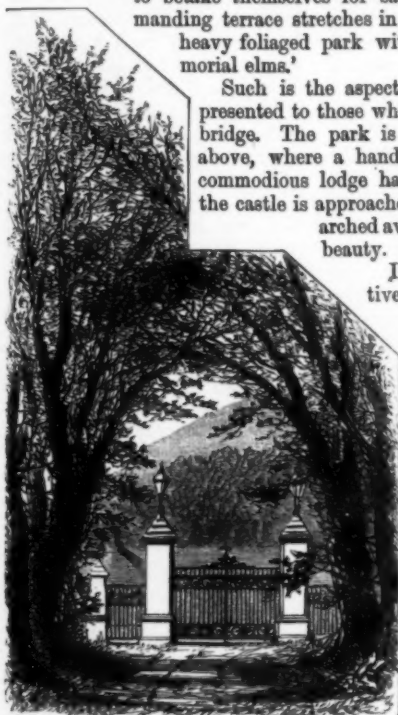
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of a more modern period added. The keep, with the picturesque eagle-tower tacked on to it, stands high above the main building, forming a broad and solid outline against the sky; and the newer buildings of occupation, as they nestle underneath the old feudal tower, present a bold and handsome frontage, prettily broken up with towers, turrets, battlements, and projecting wings and mullioned windows, making a pleasant intermingling of light and shade, beauty and diversity. The new wing on the north-east side has just been built by Mr. William Foster, who has also had the keep rendered habitable; thus providing floor upon floor of splendid rooms in place of the tumble-down spaces in which, in days gone by, the castle's beleaguered garrison were accustomed, in their last extremity, to betake themselves for safety. A broad and commanding terrace stretches in front, and below lies the heavy foliated park with its avenue of 'immemorial elms.'

Such is the aspect of the castle to-day, as presented to those who view it from the village bridge. The park is entered a little distance above, where a handsome new gateway and commodious lodge have been erected, whence the castle is approached through a sloping high-arched avenue of trees of wondrous beauty.

In point of internal attractiveness, Hornby Castle, advantaged by the good taste and ample means of its present lord, has now probably greater charms for the searcher after the beautiful than ever it had. Without entering into a minute description of the various apartments of this extensive mansion, a brief enumeration of some of their main features may not be altogether out of place.

After the entrance-hall has been passed the visitor finds himself in a spacious dining-hall, with



ENTRANCE GATEWAY.

its massive carved roof, its huge fireplace, and superbly-ornamented mantel. The emblematical roses of York and Lancaster are interwoven with the general decorative design, and a bold and substantial dado of many carvings runs round the room, and upon shields set at regular intervals are painted the coats-of-arms of the successive owners of the Hornby estate—lords of the honour or manor of Hornby, one of the most extensive and important manors in Lancashire—from 1066 downwards. To the right of the dining-hall is the

library, a lofty and handsome room, which, commanding as it does one of the most beautiful prospects in the north of England, might well serve as a happy vantage-ground for the musings of the poet or the communings of the philosopher. In the opposite wing of the castle is the Magistrates' Room, where the lords of Hornby have been accustomed to administer justice, as by law directed, or to exact those manorial privileges which had descended to them from their lordly predecessors. Reception-rooms, anterooms, and a great labyrinth of domestic offices stretch behind; and on the floor above is the principal drawing-room, wherein the bright, elegant, and costly decorations, and rich upholsterings, form a striking contrast to the more massive ornamentation of the large hall below. Boudoirs, *salons*, galleries, and far-reaching corridors, bounded by bedrooms large enough for the accommodation of giants, succeed each other in the rear and at the sides of the drawing-room; and diving down again to the ground-floor, and getting away to the back, beyond a luxuriously fitted up series of bathrooms and lavatories, of sufficient extent and diversity for a hydropathic establishment, we come upon the great frowning inner walls of the keep itself. These walls are six feet in thickness, and the name, motto, and crest of the builder, Sir Edward Stanley, the first Lord Montague, are found legibly chiselled upon them. Ascending the winding staircase, with its narrow window-slits showing through the solid masonry every now and then, and looking in at the story after story of immense rooms which have been made in the interior of the keep, we bit by bit make the entire ascent, and reach the summit of the topmost tower.

From this height the outlook is most captivating. Spreading from the rocky base of the tower we see a landscape of great extent and beauty;

'Wide plains, fair trees, and lawny slopes' present themselves to the eye in exquisite alternation. The principal portion of the Hornby estate can here be overlooked, including in the prospect the pretty village of Hornby itself, resting in the shadow of the castle; the fine expanse of wood through which the Hindburn runs, and which, on account of the romantic nature of the dells and glens and precipitous crags that are hidden there amongst the trees, is known as Little Switzerland; the pretty villages of Wray and Tatham; a vast extent of moorland melting away in the purple distance, where the lord of Hornby and his friends can enjoy some of the best shooting that is to be had in the country; while, grim and mighty, making its presence felt most obtrusively of all, stands the mountain form of Ingleborough sentinel-like away to the north.

It was probably from this point, if not from this eminence, that Drayton, in the sixteenth century, viewed the valley of the Lune. He says in his *Polyolbion*:

When Læ, the most loved child of this
delicious dale,
And Wenning, on the way present their
either spring;
Next them she Henburne hath, and
Roburne, which do bring
Their bounties in one bark their mistress
to prefer,
That she with greater state may come to
Lancastre.'

In all these streams there is an abundance of fish—salmon, trout, &c.; and the owners of Hornby have always regarded their rights in this respect of great value. The Hornby Castle estate altogether, under its present proprietorship, comprises over 5000 acres; and Mr. Foster, lord of the honour and

manor of Hornby, the manor of Tatham, and the manor of Burton in Lonsdale and the forest of Mewith, possesses shooting rights extending far beyond the Hornby Castle estate; he also has the right of presentation to the livings of Hornby and Tatham. Since Mr. Foster acquired the Hornby estate he has added to it by purchase to a considerable extent, and the domain appurtenant to the castle is at the present time much larger than when Mr. John Foster made the original purchase.

Leaving for a while our perch upon the eagle-tower, to search the records of history and romance, and on the evidence of musty deeds and ancient muments, we will now endeavour to read the story of the past concerning this castle of Hornby.

Whitaker considers that the site of the castle was unquestionably occupied by the Romans, the finding of coins and brick pavement sufficiently proving the fact. He thinks it was probably the villa of some wealthy provincial on the line of the Roman way from the *Setantiorum Portus* to *Bremetonacæ*. He does not deem it too bold a conjecture, either, to suppose that in a position nearer the junction of the Wenning with the Lune stood the castle of Horne, the first founder of Hornby; and that that being abandoned during the devastations of the Danes, the first Norman possessor found in an insulated natural hill, on the bank of the Wenning, a site better adapted to the genius of fortification in his age. In the Domesday Survey, Hornby, Melling, and Wennington are returned as forming one manor in the West Riding of Yorkshire among the lands of the king, of whom Ulf is found to hold nine carucates or ploughlands, and Orme one carucate and

a half there. The name of Ulf is perpetuated in the district by a place known as Wolfa Crag. The barony of Hornby was undoubtedly, after the Conquest, carved out of the honour of Lancaster by its lord and granted to one of his knights, to be held of him by feudal service. The name of this first Norman lord of Hornby is involved in obscurity, but in the reign of Henry II. the estate is found to be in the possession of the family of Montbegon. Roger de Montgomery, Earl of Poitou, was the first Baron of Lancaster after the accession of the Conqueror; and it is probable either that the Montbegon family acquired a grant of Hornby and other lands directly from the Earl, or that the estate came to them through the marriage of Adam de Montbegon, *tempore* Henry II., with the daughter of Adam Fitz Swaine, son of Swaine and grandson of Ailric, who was a landholder in Yorkshire contemporary with the Earl of Poitou.

The possession by the Montbegon family of the Honour of Hornby continued without any circumstances demanding special notice until the death of Roger de Montbegon in 1225-6 (10 Hen. III.), when the castle and manor of Hornby were committed to the custody of Earl Warren. In the following year, Henry de Montbegon (also named Monegheden and Munden) being found to be his cousin and heir, Earl Warren was commanded by the King's writ to surrender to him the possession of Hornby. Shortly afterwards Henry de Monegheden, or Montbegon, conveyed the Honour of Hornby to Hubert de Burgh, a name, it will be remembered, which Shakespeare has used with powerful effect in *King John*. Hubert de Burgh was Earl of Kent, and

the grant of Hornby was made to him and his wife Margaret, and their heirs. In 1231 Hubert fell under the displeasure of the King, and his lands were forfeited; but in 1233, after the reversal of his outlawry, Hubert obtained restitution of the estate, which he continued to enjoy until his death in 1242, when the King again assumed possession, but immediately afterwards restored the property to Hubert de Burgh's widow, Margaret, Countess of Kent. The Countess appears to have held the castle and lands of Hornby until her death in the 44th Hen. III., when her son and heir, John de Burgh, found himself involved in litigation with Elena, widow of John de Lungvillers, concerning the ownership of the estate.

This litigation throws a considerable light upon the high-handed style of the Plantagenet lords. Elena de Lungvillers claimed the third part of the manors, castle, and lands of Hornby and Melling as her dower, conferred upon her, she asserted, on the day of her marriage by her husband, John de Lungvillers. It was pleaded in answer that John de Lungvillers was never possessed of the property, except by an intrusion which he made after the death of Roger de Montbegon, 'whose right the said lands were;' and that Henry de Monegheden, cousin and heir of Roger, afterwards ejected John therefrom, and held the same as his inheritance, until John 'brought an assize of disseizen' and obtained a verdict in his favour by a suborned jury, which verdict was subsequently set aside as false by a second jury, by whose verdict Henry de Monegheden had recovered possession. To this Dame Elena replied by alleging that Roger de Montbegon before his death enfeoffed her husband of

the property, and that the latter had possession thereof more than a year before Henry de Monegheden, by the power of Hubert de Burgh, ejected him; and further, she contended, that the verdict given by the first jury was truly made, but that, notwithstanding, her husband could not obtain seizin, 'owing to the power of Hubert de Burgh.'

The result of this litigation has not been discovered, but another action was subsequently brought by Dame Elena de Lungvillers's granddaughter, Margaret (wife of Geoffrey de Nevill), to recover possession of the Honour of Hornby, and she succeeded in her suit. As the grounds of this decision must have been the truth of the allegations made by Elena de Lungvillers, it is probable that her action was successful also. The alleged relationship of Geoffrey de Nevill (husband of Margaret de Lungvillers) to the family of De Burgh, derived, according to a pedigree of the seventeenth century, through a marriage of one of his ancestors with the sister of the Earl of Kent, may have led to a compromise of the dispute. This, at any rate, is evident, that Geoffrey and Margaret de Nevill were put in possession of the Honour of Hornby at the close of the reign of Henry III. The Nevills, into whose family Hornby was thus brought, were a younger branch of the Nevills of Raby, afterwards Earls of Westmoreland.

Geoffrey de Nevill died in 1285, and his widow, Margaret de Nevill, became Lady of the Honour of Hornby. She died in 1318, and was succeeded in the tenancy of Hornby by John de Nevill, her grandson. It is recorded that in 1323 two of the rebels who joined Thomas, Earl of Lancaster, in his insurrection against the King,

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were taken to Hornby Castle, and there being found to be Scotchmen were allowed their liberty. John de Nevill died in 1335, and Sir Robert de Nevill followed him in the ownership of the estate. In 1351 Sir Robert leased to Henry, Duke of Lancaster, for the term of his life, the manors and castle of Hornby 'by the service of a rose.' This was in reality a mortgage transaction, and on the Duke's decease the obligation had been discharged. Another Sir Robert de Nevill, probably the son of the former Sir Robert, was in possession of Hornby early in the fourteenth century; and in 1413 the Escheator of the County Palatine of Lancaster declared that Margaret, daughter of Sir Thomas Nevill (son of the second Sir Robert) and wife of Thomas Beaufort, Earl of Dorset (afterwards Duke of Exeter), was entitled to the property. The next in succession was Margaret, wife of Sir William Harrington, the Duchess of Exeter's aunt. On the death of the Duke, who outlived his wife, the Honour of Hornby became vested in Sir William Harrington, in right of his wife, and Sir John Langton, cousin of Lady Harrington, and a deed of partition was executed between the parties in 1433, whereby Hornby fell to the Harringtons.

During the Wars of the Roses, the Harringtons of Hornby allied themselves with the Yorkists, and suffered severely in the long internecine struggle. Dr. Whitaker says, that Sir William Harrington was killed at Agincourt; but this is obviously an error. Margaret, Lady Harrington, died in 1450. Her son and successor, Sir Thomas Harrington, together with his eldest son, Sir John Harrington, received their deathblow while fighting side by side under the

banner of the White Rose at the battle of Wakefield, in 1460. Sir John left two daughters, Anne and Elizabeth, aged respectively nine and eight, his heiresses. Sir James Harrington, however, the paternal uncle of these young ladies, took forcible possession of Hornby, and claimed to be its lawful owner; but, on an appeal for protection to the Court of Chancery, Sir James, and a tool of his who had assisted him in his designs, were committed to the Fleet Prison. The wardship of the heiresses and the custody of their inheritance were granted to Thomas, Lord Stanley, who married the eldest daughter, Anne, to his third son, Sir Edward Stanley, and the youngest, Elizabeth, to his nephew, John Stanley.

In 1470 (49 Henry VI.) Hornby Castle underwent a siege. The King ordered a cannon called Mile End to be sent from Bristol to the assistance of Sir Thomas Stanley, who had orders to reduce the castle. What force held possession of the castle at that time is not recorded, but Sir Thomas Stanley's own interest in the place was probably sufficient to preserve it from destruction. It might be during one of the periods when Sir James Harrington held the castle that the siege took place. Sir James, who was greatly disliked by the Lancastrians for having been the means of discovering the hiding-place of Henry VI., proved a very thorn in the flesh to his two nieces; he was for ever harassing them by forcible entries and vexatious litigation. He alleged that Sir Thomas Harrington had before his death executed a deed which conveyed his estates to trustees for the benefit of his next heirs male; and that the eldest son, Sir John, having died without male issue, he, Sir James,

was the next heir male. This deed, it was said, had been intrusted to the custody of a trustworthy servant, who subsequently produced it. Sir James's claim was unsuccessful, but was renewed at a later date by his son John, which John, it was popularly supposed, was put to death by poison, by Sir Edward Stanley's promptings, for fear of his succeeding to the Hornby estates. There is a large amount of documentary evidence, however, existing that goes against this suspicion, although Dr. Whitaker favours the popular idea. There was much litigation and diplomatising for the next year or two; but ultimately Sir Edward Stanley, in right of his wife, Anne, and otherwise, became possessed of the entire Honour of Hornby, as well as of other lands adjacent thereto.

We have now arrived at a period when history left its special mark upon the records of Hornby. Up to this time, despite the frequent change of owners and the worry of family disputes, the old fortress had kept up its state and dignity, and the lords of Hornby and their retainers had indulged in the excitement of the chase in the woods and forests around. Many a gay cavalcade would in those days set out from the gray old castle, and, to the sound of the horn and the baying of the hounds, would sally forth in pursuit of the deer, the roe, or other favourite animals of the chase. But the day had now come for the inhabitants of this luxuriant valley to have their hearts stirred by sounds of more ominous meaning. Many a time had the men of Lunesdale been called upon to repel the Scots in their plundering raids across the border; but now, in face of the threatened incursion by James IV. of Scotland, they were summoned by their lords to go out to do

battle with the Scots in their own country. It was then, as the old ballad tells, that

'From Lancashire and Cheshire fast,
They to the lusty Stanley drew;
From Hornby whereas he in hast
Set forward with a comely crew.

'What banners brave before him blazed!
The people mused where he did pass;
Poor husbandmen were much amazed,
And women wond'ring cried, "Alas!"

Young wives did weep in woful cheer,
To see their friends in harness dress;
Some rent their cloaths, some tore their
hair,
Some held their babes unto their breast.'

Sir Edward Stanley had been well schooled in arms, and had early gained the favour of the King, whose greeting when they met was, 'Ho, my soldier!' It is said of him that 'the camp was his school, and his learning the pike and sword.' His greatest enemies would not deny his valour. Stanley marched gallantly forward with his brave men; and when they came to 'Flodden's fatal field,' and all the Earl of Surrey's army were ranged in order of battle, Stanley was directed to the command of the rear portion of the English forces, and to him, more perhaps than any other single commander, that day's memorable victory was due. Scott has enshrined Stanley's deeds at Flodden in imperishable verse. Few couplets are better known than that which tells us that

'Charge, Chester, charge! On, Stanley,
on!"

Were the last words of Marmion.'

So sudden and unexpected was the onslaught which Stanley made that the Scots were at once put into great disorder. The ballad before alluded to says,

'With him did pass a mighty pow'r,
Of soldiers seemly to be seen.

Most lively lads in Lunesdale bred,
With weapons of unwieldy weight;
All such as Tatham fells had fed
Went under Stanley's streamer bright.

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From Bowland billmen bold were boun,
With such as Botton-Banks did hide;
From Wharmore up to Whittington,
And all to Wenning water-side.

From Silverdale to Kent Sand side,
Whose soil is sown with cockle-shells;
From Cartmel eke and Conny-side,
With fellows fierce from Furnace fells.

All Lancashire for the most part,
The lusty Stanley stout did lead;
A stock of striplings, strong of heart,
Brought up from babes with beef and bread.*

Stanley's neighbour of Thurland Castle, Brian Tunstall, a sort of Lancastrian Bayard, whom Scott calls the 'stainless knight,' fell in the battle.

One can well imagine the fervour of the welcome which would be given to the braw Lancashire lads as they came back, flushed with victory, to their homes in and around Hornby, and what festive doings there would be at the castle when 'stout Stanley' took his place again within its ancient walls as Lord Monteagle, the title with which his sovereign readily rewarded him on his return from Flodden. The title was suggested by the fact that his ancestors had borne an eagle on their crest; and the eagle's claw and the motto,

GLAV ET GANT

E. STANLEY

appear on the north-east side of the old keep.

Tradition has busied itself considerably with Lord Monteagle's name. The generally received opinion is that the beautiful octagonal tower of Hornby Church was built by him in obedience to a vow made at Flodden; but there exists a legend which points to another cause for its erection. He filled a large space in the history of his time. 'Twice,' it is recorded, 'did he and Sir John Wallop penetrate, with only 800 men, into the very heart of France; and four times did he and Sir

Thomas Lovell save Calais—the first time by intelligence, the second by stratagem, the third by their valour and undaunted courage, and the fourth by their unwearied patience and assiduity.' We also learn that 'in the dangerous insurrection by Aske and Captain Cobler, his zeal for the prince's service and the welfare of his country caused him to outstrip his sovereign's commands by putting himself at the head of his troops without the King's commission, for which dangerous piece of loyalty he asked pardon, and received thanks.' Still, in spite of all this distinction and prosperity, the common people repeated dark insinuations against his name; for not only was he suspected of having resorted to foul means to get rid of the heir of the Harringtons, but he was supposed to hold secret and unholy communings with things of evil.*

He was said to be a materialist and a free-thinker; and one night, as the legend goes, 'by the still light of a cloudless harvest moon,' two men ascended the steep path leading to the castle. A light was visible from the high watch-tower, where Lord Monteagle was accustomed to keep his nightly vigils. The men advanced over the drawbridge; and while some half-dozen hoarse-throated dogs met them with their loud bayings, they passed forward and ascended the winding staircase to the turret-chamber. There, surrounded by furnaces, alembics, crucibles, and other instruments of mystery, they saw, by the light of a dim lamp, the figure of the lord of Hornby seated before a table. One of the two men was a popular divine, known as the parson of Slaidburn; the other was Maudsley, Lord Monteagle's faithful servitor. The

* Roby's *Legends and Traditions of Lancashire*.

latter was bidden to retire; and then the baron entered into a long argument with the parson about the mysteries of existence and the far reaching speculations concerning immortality. Lord Monteagle declared the Bible to be a forgery, and religion a mere system of priestcraft and superstition; and the parson retorted by telling the baron that he only held those views because they flattered his wishes and his fears. 'Fears! What fears?' demanded Lord Monteagle. 'The fear of facing the spirit of thy lady's cousin,' said the priest; 'his blood yet crieth from the ground!' The hero of Flodden, the legend says, turned pale, trembled, and drew his sword; but the undaunted minister heeded not the action. 'Put up thy sword,' he said; 'thou hast enow of sins to repent thee of without an old man's blood added to the number.' Lord Monteagle, chafing under the parson's words, said, after a pause, 'My cousin, John Harrington, died in his own chamber. In this house, God wot. Thou didst shrive him at his last shift, and how sayest thou he was poisoned?' The priest answered, 'I said not aught so plainly;' then, with a sudden movement, he cried, 'Behold him there!' The baron glared wildly around, and his brow became suffused with a clammy perspiration. Whether any object was actually to be seen, or whether the priest had merely resorted to a trick in order to frighten Lord Monteagle, tradition does not say; but from that time forth it was known that the baron was an altered man, and immediately afterwards arose the noble church of Hornby, with its beautiful octagon tower, which still bears upon its front the following inscription:

'Edwardus Stanley miles, Dns.
Monteagle me fieri fecit.'

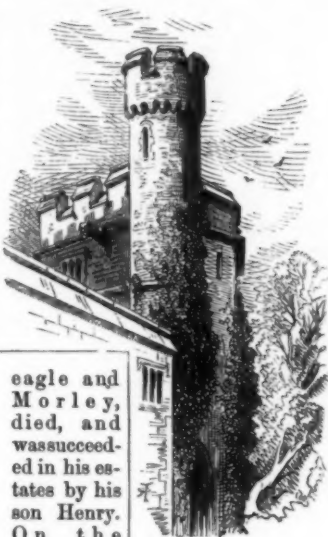
There is little doubt, whatever may have been Sir Edward Stanley's views concerning religion at the time alluded to, he died in the full recognition of the Christian faith. This is sufficiently evidenced by his will, dated the 5th April 1523, the opening sentences of which are worth quoting on this head. 'It is necessarie,' it runs, 'and requisite for every good true Christian man to provide, foresee, and to ordain for ye life ev'lasting in heaven. I, therefore, Edward Stanley, Knt., Lord Monteagle, Knt. of the Order of the Garter, being hale and of good deliberation, and of perfect minde and memorie—laude, therefore, and praise be to Almighty God, my maker and redeemer, the good and sweet intelligence of these sentences: *Memento homo, quod cinis es, et, in cineris reverteris*, and of this, *Domine tue . . . quia morieres*; willing while reason ruleth in my minde, and quietness in the members of my bodie, of my temporal goods somewhat to ordain for ye good of my sowle, do ordaine this my last will,' &c. He bequeathed his soul 'to Almighty God, the glorious and eternal Trinitie, to our Ladie St. Marie, moder of M'cie, St. Margarete, and to all ye saintes in heaven;' ordered his body to be buried in Hornby Chapel, which he directed his executors to complete—a trust which, unfortunately, they did not fulfil, from some cause or other; gave 'black gowns to his servants, children, and friends;' and ordered that 'xxiv white gownes be geven to xxiv poor honest men to bear torches.' 'Alsoe to ye most excellent prince and my sovereign good lord Kynge Henrie VIII., a small gold ring, with a table of a dyamond viii square sett in ye same, and cl in gold, beseeching his grace to pray for my sowle, and to bee good and

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Lord Monteagle died at Hornby in the same year, 1523, and his son Thomas, who was only fifteen years of age at this time, succeeded him. Whitaker's statement that this second Lord Monteagle was rumoured to be the person who struck the fatal blow which killed King James IV. at Flodden must therefore be incorrect. Thomas, Lord Monteagle, held the Honour of Hornby from 1523 to 1559 (2nd Elizabeth), when he died, and his son William came into the inheritance. William, Lord Monteagle, held the Hornby estates until his death, about 1580. His daughter and only child, Elizabeth, married to Edward Parker, Lord Morley, succeeded him. The next Lord of Hornby was their son William, who acquired the estate on his father's death in 1618. William, Lord Monteagle and Morley, like his grandfather, Sir Edward Stanley, was destined to become historically famous. Camden says, 'We and our posterity must acknowledge [him] to have been born for the good of the whole kingdom. For, from an obscure letter privately sent to him, and by him most opportunely produced, the wickedest plot which the most accomplished villany could contrive was detected when the kingdom was on the eve of destruction, when certain wretches, under the cursed mask of religion, lodged a great quantity of gunpowder under the parliament-house, and waited to fire it and blow up their king and country in a moment.' It was in consequence, doubtless, of his service to the nation in discovering the Gunpowder Plot that William, Lord Monteagle, and his family were exempted from the operation of the severe laws against Roman

Catholic recusants. In 1617 King James, while on his journey from Edinburgh to London, honoured his preserver by visiting him at his castle of Hornby. Five years afterwards, William, Lord Mont-



eagle and Morley, died, and was succeeded in his estates by his son Henry.

On the breaking out of the Civil War, Henry, Lord Monteagle and Morley, allied himself with the Royalists, and Hornby Castle was on several occasions the scene of tumult and conflict. In 1625 a search for arms was made at the castle; and in 1643 Colonel Ashton and a force of Roundheads attacked and took the castle, and shortly afterwards the Commons passed an order for its being dismantled. The order was not carried out, however; and a few months later Roger Kirkby and Rigby of Burgh got a number of Furness and Cartmel men together and attempted to rescue both Hornby Castle and the neighbouring castle of Thurland. Colonel Alexander

Rigby heard of their intention, went out to meet them, and drove them back to the verge of the sea beyond Lancaster.

On the establishment of the Commonwealth, the estates of Henry, Lord Monteagle and Morley, were seized by the Parliament, and the Honour of Hornby was held on lease by one John Wildman for about a year. The attainted lord died, however, in 1655, and his son Thomas succeeded in recovering possession of his father's estates prior to the Restoration. Thomas, Lord Monteagle and Morley, after mortgaging Hornby several times, ultimately conveyed the equity of redemption, in 1663, to Robert, Earl of Cardigan, whose successor in 1713 sold the castle and its dependencies to Colonel Francis Charteris, known as 'the wicked lord,' who was condemned to death for a capital offence in the reign of George II. Colonel Charteris's estates were forfeited, but subsequently obtaining a pardon from the king, the honour, manor, and estates were regranted to him. He died in 1732, and the Honour descended to his daughter Janet, wife of the Earl of Wemyss. Lord Wemyss resided at Hornby for some considerable time; and his son, Lord Elcho, slept at the castle on his march southward with the rebel army in 1745. This circumstance was regarded with great disfavour by the Earl's neighbours; and both he and his son Francis, who succeeded him in 1756, were frequently subjected to annoyance for having favoured the rebels. For some time the castle was left untenanted; but in 1789 the then Earl Wemyss and his son, Lord Elcho, sold the castle, honour, and dependencies to Mr. John Marsden of Wennington Hall. Mr. Marsden put the

castle into complete repair, and took up his abode there in 1794. On Mr. Marsden's death childless, in 1826, Hornby Castle became once more the subject of litigation, and for ten years the lawyers pleaded and counter-pleaded respecting it, urging suit and appeal with great pertinacity. This *cause célèbre* was instituted, in the first instance, by Rear-Admiral Tatham against Mr. George Wright, who had been Mr. Marsden's agent up to the time of his death, and in whose favour partially he had made a will. After a long and costly litigation, lasting from 1826 to 1836, Admiral Tatham succeeded in establishing his claim as the heir-at-law of Mr. Marsden, whose nephew he was, and he took possession of Hornby amidst great rejoicings. In 1840 Admiral Tatham transferred the estate to Mr. Pudsey Dawson, who took down the 'sash-windowed mansion' erected by the Charteris family, and alluded to by Gray, and built in front of the ancient keep of the Monteagles the main portion of the present hall. Mr. Dawson owned the Hornby demesnes down to the year 1860, when Mr. John Foster purchased the property, and continued to reside there up to within a short period of his death.

One of the last 'great occasions' for Hornby and its castle was in January 1877, when, instead of the denizens of the pastoral valley of the Lune being summoned together to accompany the lord of Hornby to battle, as 'in the brave days of old,' they attended at the castle, of their own promptings, to tender to Mr. Foster their good wishes and congratulations on his entering upon his eightieth year. The residents on the estate had enjoyed nearly twenty years of quiet and repose under the kindly guardianship of

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this captain of industry, who, when he had fought his good fight amongst the toilers and leaders in factory and mart, and won his reward of fortune, had settled down to end his days amongst the rural delights and historic associations of this ancient lordship. The bells in the fine old church-tower were set ringing, and on every side were the most profuse signs of rejoicing. There was something deeply touching in the manner in which the eloquently-worded address of the tenants was that day handed to the venerable landlord, and in the simple earnestness and gratitude of Mr. Foster's reply; and in the evening a banquet on a magnificent scale was given by the tenants, the various members of the Foster family being invited. The day altogether was one that will long be held in remembrance.

Shortly before Mr. John Foster's death, in the early part of last year, Mr. William Foster came into possession of the Hornby estates; and under his direction the castle promises to become a more imposing figure in the landscape than at any former period. When time has sufficiently subdued the newness of aspect of the additional wings and enlargements which he has made, the building and its surroundings will be well worthy of being put upon canvas by another Turner.

There still remains something to be said regarding the village itself and its notable features. The principal hostel, the Castle Inn, is of that homely type which Dickens so much admired, and is probably the place visited by Drunken Barnaby when he rested at 'Horneby, seat renowned,' as he calls it, and penned his amusing doggerel thereanent. The church, however, is the most striking feature; and its tower, so frequently

alluded to, is of such singular beauty as to cause one to regret that the rest of the edifice was not completed on the same scale. The church is dedicated to St. Margaret, and was intended 'as the domestic chapel of the lords of Hornby, as well as to become the parochial chapel for the townships of Hornby, Farleton, Roeburndale, and Wray with Botton.* Of late years some slight improvements have been made in the appearance of the church, but, with its flat roof and unrelieved spaces, it yet remains internally a somewhat ungainly-looking edifice. Three handsome stained-glass windows have been placed in the chancel, one to the memory of Lord Monteagle, one in commemoration of Mr. John Marsden, and a third contains a figure in representation of St. Margaret. There is also a tablet to the memory of Dr. Lingard, the historian, in the chancel, which memorial was erected by his 'friends and associates,' Mr. Pudsey Dawson, Mr. John Murray, and Mr. Coulston.

This is perhaps the only instance that could be cited of a Roman Catholic dignitary having a monument erected to him in modern times in a Protestant church.

Dr. Lingard lived in a pleasantly-situated house nearly opposite the church. The house stands back a little way from the road, and has a small garden in front, with protecting wall and iron railings coming up to the roadside. Adjoining the house is a little chapel, where for forty years—from 1811 to 1851—the doctor was accustomed to perform his humble ministrations. There is a large garden behind the house and chapel; and there, amongst sweet-smelling flowers and overhanging trees, the good priest was

* Baines's *History of Lancashire*.

went to sit or walk, book in hand, pursuing his studies in healthful seclusion. Mr. Murray of Hornby Hall, and other venerable residents of the village, still preserve pleasant recollections of the historian, for whom the greatest possible respect was always felt by those amongst whom he lived. The Roman Catholic mission at Hornby was founded by Anne, daughter of Thomas Benison of Hornby,

that quiet unpretentious house at Hornby that he wrote, year by year, with steady industry, but quietly and calmly, his *History of England*, a work which has long been regarded as one of the most able histories that we possess.

It is related of Dr. Lingard, by one who well remembers him, that he was an early riser, being down-stairs never later than eight o'clock. He would then take a



HORNBY CHURCH.

and wife of Mr. John Fenwick of Borrow, and it was to this place of retirement that Dr. Lingard came from Ushaw in September 1811, having declined to take the presidency of the college at Maynooth, which post he had been urged to accept by Bishop Moylan. From that time forward he had ample leisure to follow the bent of his genius; and it was in

walk in his garden, after which he went in to breakfast, and when the meal was over replied to the letters which the morning's post might have brought him. From that time to noon it was his practice to employ himself in literary work, and from noon until about three o'clock he would walk out. He was of a genial sociable nature, and both received and paid many

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daily visits. One of his most intimate friends was the vicar of Hornby, Mr. Fogg; indeed, all the English Church clergy in the district were on intimate terms with him, and none of the country gentlemen who lived near, from the occupant of the castle downwards, ever thought a dinner-party complete without the doctor.

Many distinguished personages made their way to Hornby to visit Dr. Lingard. Brougham, Scarlett, Pollock, and other leading members of the Northern Circuit were in the habit of driving over from Lancaster to spend a vacant day with the historian, whenever assize business brought them to John of Gaunt's ancient city. Francis Jeffrey, so well known as the original editor of the *Edinburgh Review*, came now and then also. One time Samuel Lover visited him and painted the doctor's portrait. During his stay Lover sang his song, 'The Angel's Whisper,' to the historian, who was deeply moved. Dr. Lingard was consulted by everybody in Hornby, Catholic or Protestant, when in any difficulty, and there was little passed in the neighbourhood without his being aware of it. He was particularly fond of children, and often had a number playing around him even when engaged in writing his History. Every Christmas-day he gave a dinner to a large party of children. Their simple prattle delighted him beyond measure, and they used to follow him about and look up to him as to a grandfather. He had a dog, which he called Etna, that was a great household favourite and companion of his walks. One day he and Etna sat down on the river-bank, and on the other side of the stream the doctor saw a farmer hard at work in the field,

his hat lying on the ground a few yards away. The doctor, who dearly loved a practical joke, signalled Etna to fetch the farmer's hat; and the dog at once proceeded stealthily across the river, and soon returned with the hat in its mouth. This done, the doctor placed the hat on the end of his stick and hoisted it up, until it caught the gaze of the farmer, who was much astonished to find that his head-covering had been secretly drafted away across the stream. Etna was a very sagacious animal, and lived on perfectly amicable terms with another of Dr. Lingard's household pets, an exceedingly fine and powerful cat. The doctor's chief amusement was whist, which he played almost every evening with his friend Mr. Murray and others. He was a capital player, and in defeat or victory his good-nature always kept him at the same genial level.

Dr. Lingard, in his forty years' residence at Hornby, could not help making a marked impression upon the social life and cultivated thought of the district of Lonsdale. During the earlier portion of his time there he employed himself largely in writing for the reviews and magazines, as well as in the composition of his history, and was looked up to whenever a literary controversy was raging for an expression of opinion, which he was generally free enough in giving vent to. He was one of the first promoters of the *Lancaster Guardian*, a paper which still exists and thrives, and occasionally he would figure in its columns as a correspondent.

Cardinal Wiseman was a pupil of Dr. Lingard's, and until the doctor's death the two kept up an affectionate correspondence. Lingard himself objected to having titles and honours conferred

upon him. He had a cardinal's hat offered to him, but declined it. At one time the Duke of Norfolk, Lord Holland, and other eminent personages tried to induce the doctor to make application for a pension from the Civil List; but the historian's high-mindedness would not permit him to do the necessary canvassing. This was at a time when Dr. Lingard had suffered severe pecuniary loss from the suspension of a Lancaster bank. Subsequently, however, a donation of 300*l.* was made from the Queen's privy purse, and on receiving it he purchased a carriage; and he afterwards used to say to his friends that the Queen had given him his carriage.

His History, however, brought him a considerable sum year after year, and he died worth 25,000*l.*, which he left to his old college at Ushaw. Dr. Lingard will be a memory for all time to come for the village of Hornby; and his house, chapel, and garden, which still remain as he left them, constitute a literary shrine at which Protestant and Catholic may worship with equal reverence. The Rev. Father Fisher, who is not less esteemed than his predecessor for piety and goodness of heart, now holds the Roman Catholic living at Hornby, and resides in the house formerly occupied by the historian.

Before concluding our account of Hornby it will be necessary to mention one or two antiquarian features of interest which remain as reminders of a distinguished past. Up to the period of the dissolution of monastic establishments in England, Hornby had a priory, which was a cell of the Abbey of Croxton, in Leicestershire, and had been endowed by the liberality of Roger de Montbegon, who, as the *Testa de Nevill*

records, gave one hundred acres of land in alms to the canons of Hornby. After the dissolution, however, the site and possessions of the priory were granted to Lord Monteagle and Henry Croft, and little by little the ruins disappeared, until now there is nothing left to denote where the priory stood. The site occupied by this monastic building was a commanding situation overlooking the Lune, a short distance above its junction with the Wenning. About half a mile higher up are the remains of a fortification which once guarded the pass of the Lune. A tumulus or barrow was connected with the fortification. On another part of the Hornby estate, Camp Field, are the remains of a Roman encampment in perfect outline.

Indeed, the whole of the extensive possessions now appurtenant to Hornby Castle present features or associations of abiding interest. The castle itself—which, by the way, must not be confounded with another Hornby Castle in Yorkshire, owned by the Duke of Leeds—has a history that corresponds to all the fluctuations of English social, political, and religious life. In Norman, Plantagenet, and Tudor times, when the dependencies of Hornby were little less than eighty miles in circumference; when herds of wild-deer ranged its forests, commons, and parks; and when

'crested chiefs and tissued dames
Assembled at the clarion's call
In this proud castle's high-arched hall,'

—the aristocracy of the time was nobly represented by the lords who there held feudal sway. But, in these later times, there has arisen a new aristocracy, the aristocracy of commerce, and that is the dignity which is to-day represented by the possessor of this ancient lordship.

AS I SAT 'A-THYNKYNGE.'

NOTHING ! Only a soft stray curl
Cut from the brow of a laughing girl—
Cut from her brow for me, you know,
Twenty summers, at least, ago!
Yet still its gloss, its fragrance, lingers,
And still it twines about my fingers,
Falling into the very curve
That time has helped it to preserve,
The curve which first it learned to seek,
Taught by the pressure of her cheek ;
And cheek and curl alike were soft—
I ought to know ; I've kissed them oft.

You smile ; but has it chanced to you
To look for love in eyes of blue ?
Or parted lips ? or sunny hair ?
And to believe you found it there ?
That was the way with me, you know,
Twenty summers, at least, ago.
She looked in my face—my love, my pearl !—
And cut me this, her favourite curl !

Only a year, and I had seen
A cheek as soft as hers had been,
And lips as sweet had met my own,
Though mine were vowed to her alone—
Vowed ; but what was a lover's oath ?
I laughed and kissed, for I loved them both.

Not your idea of love, you say ?
Well, some are never led astray ;
And some— I must have loved her, though ;
Only last night I fancied so.
Seeing her children round her knee
(That nursery where mine should be),
I looked and sighed, to think that life
Has been for me a loveless strife.
Round my cold hearth no loved ones sit,
No children's voices hallow it ;
My hopes, my youth, the years have reft—
A tress of hair is all they've left.

J. F.

MIDNIGHT FOOTSTEPS.

An old Love Story.

In an ancient Northumberland mansion two ladies sat within easy distance of a fire, the length and depth and fierceness of which would have astonished a London householder. The elder lady—and she was very old, but as brisk as a bee—sat at a large writing-table, and turned over numerous papers by the light of the wax candles that stood near in heavy silver candlesticks. The younger lady, and she was gently approaching fifty, was busily engaged with a long roll of flannel, from which she was cutting petticoats for the poor. Any winter's evening for twenty years past the widowed Mrs. Crosby and Miss Dorothy Grimble, her niece, might have been found similarly employed, the aunt ruling her large estate with a firm hand from that writing-table, and the maiden niece organising the feminine charities of the house.

'Scandalous! That fellow Smith in trouble again, and can't pay his rent. Soon see about that, idle rascal!' muttered Mrs. Crosby.

'Only a fortnight till club-day; wonder if these petticoats will be ready for the women,' murmured Miss Dorothy anxiously.

'Send them up to the school-house; they can be made there.'

'They're making new surplices for the choir; can't do both.'

'Bah! Surplices indeed! Petticoats are much more use; and I'm sure that poor miserable Rector is as much at the mercy of those women as if he wore a petticoat himself!'

'Well, aunt Crosby,' remonstrated Miss Dorothy, 'you can't *expect* a man to know all that a woman generally looks after.'

'He ought to, if he hasn't got a woman to help him. How do I know all about what a man generally looks after!'

At this moment the door was thrown open, and the old butler announced the Rector of the parish.

Mr. Preedy was a very quiet mild-looking man, upwards of fifty. He entered nervously; for he was always uncertain, until he had been greeted, whether his powerful parishioner, Mrs. Crosby, intended to snap at him or to pat him on the back (metaphorically). He now received her gracious shake of the hand with a sort of purr of gratification.

'*Don't* let me disturb you; was just passing—ahem, ah!' And then the sentence died away in an almost inaudible whisper of a self-evident fact, namely, that he had 'looked in.'

'Quite right, sit down; I'm busy, but Dolly will talk to you.'

Very uneasily he approached 'Dolly,' and seated himself on one side of the large work-basket, his hands meekly folded on his knees, and his eyes resting in fond admiration on the heaps of flannel.

'Always busy, always useful,' he murmured.

Miss Dorothy's maiden hand twitched, and she cut the flannel in a wrong place.

'Excuse me,' she said, rising

in some confusion. 'I forgot to leave out some medicine for Mrs. Brown. I will return immediately.'

The door had just closed when the Rector murmured audibly, 'Admirable woman! Invaluable!'

'Eh!' said aunt Crosby, sharply turning round, and the light from the fire made her spectacles gleam as she sat with raised pen, 'did you speak?'

'No—I, ah—merely was thinking—ah—what a loss Miss Dorothy would be to you—if—ah, she was to—leave you!'

'Bless me!' responded aunt Crosby, in a tone of slight contempt, 'no need to trouble about that till she talks of going.'

'No, no; very true, madam. You have such an amusing way of putting things!' and he ventured on a little nervous laugh, from which he sobered down supernaturally next minute. 'Perhaps—ah—she might marry?'

'What is the idiot driving at?' said Mrs. Crosby to herself, irate at so many interruptions. 'Marry, did you say?' she inquired aloud. 'Well, about five-and-twenty years ago Dolly was a well-looking young woman. Still, she *might* marry now, and so might I, for the matter of that, if any one asked me! Take a look at the *Times*, Mr. Preedy; they'll bring in the tray directly;' and the pen scratched on again.

'What a *cruel* old woman!' said the Rector to himself. 'She won't let me speak! I'll try her again, though, see if I don't.'

And having manfully turned the *Times* inside out, he gave a preparatory cough.

'Mrs. Crosby, I have long wished—'

'Why can't he keep still?' muttered the old lady *sotto voce*.

'I say I have long wished!—'

and he had attained the fixed high key in which he usually intoned the service, and the sound of his own voice thus pitched gave him courage—'to express the admiration I feel for your niece.'

'Well, she's an excellent creature, Mr. Preedy,' agreed aunt Crosby; and in despair at his pertinacity, she put down her pen, pinched her glasses tighter on her high nose, and turned her keen face full round to await the further remarks of her visitor.

'What a wife she would make, Mrs. Crosby!' cried the cheered Rector enthusiastically.

A glimmering of the truth lit up the old lady's mind, and she replied,

'You would be a better judge of that than me, Mr. Preedy; did you want to marry her?'

'O Mrs. Crosby, you are *too* good; *may* I hope!'

With an odd smile on her puckered old face, aunt Crosby said,

'Hadn't you better ask *her*? I'll go out as she comes in.'

And suiting the action to the word the mistress of the mansion left the room as her niece entered.

That night, about half-past twelve, two hours after every one had retired, Mrs. Crosby heard a footstep on the gravel walk below her window. She got up at once, lit her candle, and throwing on a warm but faded dressing-gown, she marched along the passage, and down-stairs to the room where reposed the butler and the plate-chest. The sound of the old man's snoring showed he was undisturbed. His mistress rapped sharply.

'Get up, Barnes; there's a man walking under my window!'

Quickly old Barnes obeyed, and then he called a young footman to assist him, and the two armed themselves with pokers, and sal-

lied forth from the bay window of the dining-room; while Mrs. Crosby, candle in hand, stood just within it. After prowling about for a few minutes, the men were about to come in, when the younger of the two spied a shadow close up to the gray wall of the house. He sprang forward, shouting,

'I've got him!'

And Mrs. Crosby, in a voice worthy of Mrs. Siddons, cried from the window,

'Bring him here!'

Then the butler lending his assistance, a struggling expostulating man was dragged into the presence of the owner of the mansion. Turning to vent her wrath upon him, she exclaimed in amazement, and Barnes cried in the same breath,

'It's Mr. Preedy!'

'Let me explain—Mrs. Crosby—I entreat you!' gasped the Rector. 'O, send away the servants!'

'E've bin h'after somethin', then!' said the younger man confidentially as he appeared to re-

tire, but really lingered by the door to listen.

'Speak, sir!' commanded aunt Crosby.

'Well, then,' whispered the Rector, in an agitated voice, 'she has *promised* to be mine—and—I meant no harm, indeed, dear, *kind* Mrs. Crosby; but I just walked back to look at—the light in her window!'

There was an ominous silence, and then came a crackle of laughter like the sound of holly-leaves burning, and aunt Crosby chuckled out,

'Go home, Mr. Preedy; go home and to bed! We old folks should think of our rheumatism before we perform as Romeos or Juliets! *Good-night* to you. I'll bolt the window now, if you don't mind.'

'Look at that now,' cried the young footman, delighted.

'Shame on you for listening, James!' replied Barnes, adding with a growl, 'Waking us all up to look at Miss Dorothy's winder. Well, I'm blessed if there *is* a fool like an old fool!'

M. D.

THE ETHICS OF A POSTAGE-STAMP.

I NEED hardly say that, in common with the rest of the world, I venerate the memory of Sir Rowland Hill. I must, however, confess that I think all the congratulatory talk about cheap postage requires some modification. We do not pay so much for our letters as in the last generation; but, on the other hand, we have to pay our postage a great deal oftener. Whenever in any public or private matter we come to a tabulation of expenses, we discover that the item of postage is a very considerable item. The practice of postage-cards has certainly relieved an immense amount of epistolary congestion. We are glad of the excuse to send messages instead of writing letters. Many people, who would wish courteously to acknowledge every communication, now try to give one answer that may serve a good many people at the same time. Consequently a host of candidates are frequently informed through the medium of an advertisement that a selection has been made, but that it is impossible to send this communication to each applicant. No really sensible man ever takes it as a slight that he receives no answer to a letter. The fact that there is no answer is in itself an answer. It is a common saying that silence gives consent; but epistolary silence ordinarily means the opposite—is, in fact, a mode of negation. The first ethical reflection about a postage-stamp is not to use it at all if its use can be avoided.

Now when we come to consider still further this matter of the writ-

ing of a letter, it is more serious than is thought; and, taken in the aggregate, there are few things more serious in life than letter-writing. I do not wonder that I hear people complain that postage will certainly drive them to the workhouse. Letter-writing is an appalling item in my annual expenditure. The money expense of a letter to which you put a correspondent ought to be considered by those people without conscience. The cost of a letter is at least twopence. The postage is a penny; the paper and envelope are nearly another penny; and if you take into account the time for consideration which a letter implies, the time occupied in the manual work of writing it, and the trouble of posting it, it is generally much more. I used to think that the lawyers were very exacting in demanding six-and-eightpence for a letter. But now I am of opinion that their demand is only moderate and right. I think that on an average my letters quite cost me six-and-eightpence. Some of my letters—I am presumptuous enough to think—are really worth a great deal more. But let me put the money-out-of-pocket item at twopence, from which sum I decline to abate the slightest fraction. We hear a great deal of the power of one penny. A great deal more might proportionately be said on the power of two pennies. Twopence would buy me both a morning and an evening paper; it would purchase for me the *Pall Mall Gazette* or the weekly edition of the *Times*; its purchasing

power would give me half a pint of my country's bitter, or a half-soda; it is the exact admission sum charged at the two piers at Brighton; it is a convenient tip for railway-porters and little children; it is the fee for the registration of a packet or a letter: and why should society in general charge up in hosts against me, demanding these two pennies, which is nothing to the individual separately, but as a collective demand is almost enough to make me put my affairs into liquidation?

Now there are people not over reasonable or conscientious, who certainly push this matter of cheap postage to an extreme length. They want to inquire, not within, but from without, 'about everything.' They inquire about things in general, and about nothing in particular. The Plague of Letters might almost be added to the ten plagues of Egypt. On many persons letters come like a snow-storm every morning, and just as we are beginning to be comfortable in the evening the late posts bring the business letters of the day. One reason for which one likes remote parts of the country is that you only get your letters once a day, and if you are clever you may dodge them for days together. Any man who occupies at all a conspicuous position experiences this deluge of letters. I heard of a man who devised a system of decimation in his correspondence. Having withdrawn those which seemed of a private character, he opened just one in ten of the heap, and threw the remainder into the waste-paper basket. Statesmen and editors and philanthropists and some clergymen are peculiarly liable to an irruption of letters. To a certain extent there is a delightful kind of freemasonry among persons of the same craft. Any pro-

fessional or literary man thinks himself at liberty to address inquiries for information to any of his brethren. He asks for information, and there is the implied condition that in his own turn he will always be prepared to render such. There have been many interesting friendships formed and cemented through correspondence of this kind. I believe there are cases on record in which people have married through a courtship of correspondence. But there are some persons whose unhappy privilege it is that, while they do not wish to make any inquiries themselves, they receive multitudes of inquiries from other people. They are invited, for instance, to subscribe to everything going, from pagodas to pigsties. These are the people who write about Borrioboola Gha. They are dissatisfied, and think themselves hardly used if they do not receive replies, full replies, sympathetic replies, replies by return of post. Now to such persons it may be respectfully hinted that there is a question of ethics—that is to say, of moral conduct—involved in the humble postage-stamp. This is a branch of moral philosophy which ought to be especially studied in our nineteenth century. The public conscience really requires to be educated in this respect. There is a *cacoëthes scribendi* abroad in the world which ought to be sternly repelled. Many people having written their letters ought to tear those letters into a variety of little pieces. If they don't do so themselves it will very probably be done for them. What right in the world have they to ventilate their crotchets at the expense of other people? What right have they to obtrude their unmeaning concerns—unmeaning, at least, in an immense number of instances—on

people who are overwhelmed with important interests, and whose time is as precious as gold, to whom loss of time means loss of money, fresh air, and digestion? This life of ours is terribly short, and yet the human vultures swoop down and carry away crumb after crumb of it, till the entire loaf is almost frittered away. I know kind-hearted men who are chained to their desks for hours to answer what are frequently futile and unnecessary correspondences. Each correspondent thinks that he is only a unit, and that his solitary letter will not count for anything, unthinking that these items form the combination and the mass.

I am putting the matter in a very mild and moderate way when I say that the penny postage-stamp is a matter of social ethics. Of course everything in human life has an ethical use and value. We all recognise that there is a principle in details, and that details illustrate principles. To use the language of an old Greek philosopher, there is the one in the many and the many in the one. It is the ethical principle which ought to give shape and colour even to the apparently trivial matter of the use or abuse of a postage-stamp. May I be permitted to give a little practical advice? Try and have the sympathy and insight to realise that your letter may be one of a multitudinous lot of letters. Enclose a stamp for reply. Better still, enclose a stamped and directed envelope. Best of all, if you are writing to people whose time is their money, enclose a dozen stamps for their trouble, or, for the matter of that, don't be particular to half-a-dozen dozen. This is a happy innovation which would not be highly resented. At the least, adopt the middle course of the stamped envelope. I have always found it

extremely difficult to pass over any communication where the writer has obviously wished to give as little trouble as possible. There are few men so lazy that they will not find time to scribble down an answer on the margin of the letter they receive, and put it up in the stamped and directed envelope. They will do so even if the inquiry is as silly as that which Boswell once addressed to Dr. Johnson: 'Sir, what would you do if you were shut up all alone in a tower with a baby?' And their fingers may itch to give the same answer which the immortal lexicographer addressed to his too inquisitive friend, the laconic response, 'Sir, you are an idiot.'

This saying of Johnson's reminds me of a saying which I may be excused for parenthetically inserting. One of our learned or would-be learned ladies was telling a gentleman that she had been reading through Locke's *Essay on the Human Understanding*. 'The only thing which puzzles me is the use of the word "Idēa," making the penultimate short, which may be good Greek, but is bad English. Pray what is the meaning of idēa?' 'Madam,' replied the gentleman, 'it is the feminine of idiot.'

Another practical matter may be mentioned in respect to postage-stamps. Do not throw away your old postage-stamps. The album of postage-stamps is now a familiar institution. Many of these are rare and curious, or exhaustive, and possess great interest and value. But never throw away any effigy of her Most Gracious Majesty, though defaced by the ruthless stamp. I always bless that gracious effigy, although in the interests of art and history I cannot help wishing that we had an authentic portrait, both on coin and letters, instead of the

stereotyped superannuated impression. I once had an idea of writing a story, which I would entitle 'A Million of Postage-Stamps.' I really have solid reasons for believing that there have been cranky people who have made the acquisition of a million of postage-stamps a condition for the accomplishment of some vital matter. A legacy may depend upon it. A marriage may depend upon it. Some old imbecile may have insisted on having the wall of his bedroom pasted with a million of postage-stamps. It is not perhaps so difficult as might be thought to bring together a million of used-up stamps. It might, under certain circumstances, even be worth while to buy a few thousand stamps to get them stamped. If you have the waste-paper of very busy offices, you will be greatly helped in the accumulation. Most people who begin such an accumulation break down after a time. A lady told me the other day that she was saving up her postage-stamps towards a million, and I calculated that it would take her two hundred and fifty years at the present rate to complete her task. If you can't complete your own collection you may make yourself helpful in the matter of helping to complete collections of luckier people. A million of postage-stamps is a possession decidedly worth the having. It would have its value in the universal market.

Finally, we may obtain another ethical use of the postage-stamp. The affixing of the stamp is in the majority of cases the last stage of the letter-writing. It is a kind of sealing, signing, and delivering. It would not be a

bad moral habit for a man to pause before affixing his postage-stamp, and to consider whether judiciously and conscientiously he had not better save his penny. When once he has dropped his letter into the letter-box he has committed one of the irrevocable acts of this life. Only with the utmost entreaties and only in rarest instances have I ever known of letters rendered back by the postmaster to the sender. As you prepare to affix your stamp, give one final thought to conscience, whether you might not alter, improve, or altogether obliterate that letter. There may be all sorts of wrong and evil connected with letter-writing; but to specialise an instance, you may have been writing an angry letter. It may be a clever caustic letter, and you feel rather inclined to regard it approvingly, considered as a literary production. But it may be a passionate and unjust letter. It may be unreasonable and untrue. You may be giving unmerited pain by sending it. You may bitterly regret the moments when your hand obeyed the immoral behest of your mind. You have heard of the physician's prescription about the cucumber: to peel it carefully, slice it tenderly, be gingerly with your vinegar and plenteous with the oil, sprinkle the pepper, brown or red, over it—and then fling the mess out of the window. So when you sit down to your letter, my dear and slightly excited friend, pile up your invectives, accumulate your adjectives, be caustic and cutting in your phrases; but just before you post it give a thought to the ethics of a postage-stamp, light your pipe with it, and save your halfpence.